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Encounter

edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

APRIL 1958. VOL. X. NO. 4

Published monthly at 25 Haymarket London SW1
3s. per number (USA and Canada 75c). Postage per copy: Inland 6d., Foreign 4½d.
Yearly subscription (including postage) £2: USA and Canada $7.50: India 12 rupees
US and Canadian subscriptions may be entered at British Publications Inc.
30 East 60th Street New York 22. Application for second class matter pending
at the Post Office New York N.Y.

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Bomber pilot rolls steel plate

—and finds it not so different!

Jim McCubbin has a rewarding job—in every sense.

By David Murray, writer and T.V. commentator

TEN YEARS AGO Jim McCubbin never imagined that he would ever be one of three Rollers in the big plate mill at Dalzell Steel Works, Motherwell, the most powerful of its kind in all Britain.

His youthful ambition was to be a veterinary surgeon. But the war set him on another course. In 1939, he joined the Royal Air Force as an Aircraftman (2nd Class). He was soon a Sergeant Pilot, next a Flight Sergeant, and at length a Flight Lieutenant. As a bomber pilot he did two full tours of duty, one with Coastal and the other with Bomber Command. Coming out of the R.A.F. two years after the war, he flew for B.E.A. between Belfast, Glasgow and London for another couple of years. That brought him to 1949, when he thought it was time to start a career with his two feet well on the ground.

HE GOT ON BETTER WITH HIS COAT OFF

The problem for ex-Flight Lieutenant James McCubbin, D.F.C., was what that career ought to be. Like many another young fellow out of the war, he did not fancy going back to his books. Having a good look at the steel trade in his native town it struck him that he need not go any further, and he jumped at the chance of a clerk's job in the Dalzell Steel Works. There he saw that he might make better progress with his jacket off than with it on.

To get among the pounding machinery, he became a stocktaker at the big plate mill. His big chance came when a third shift was manned at the rolls. Getting into real working togs, he took on the job of Breaking Down – rolling the great white-hot slabs to the proper width and passing them on to the Roller. In 1953, by which time he had learned a very great deal the hard way, he himself became a Roller, charged with finishing the plates to gauge.

The three Plate Mill Rollers, who work in shift turns, are the key production men at Dalzell; it was rapid promotion for a man who had never set foot in a steel plant until he was close on thirty. But Jim McCubbin had rightly figured that there would be as good chances on the production side, as in the more bookish branches. He has, of course, attended classes and read more than the odd book on steel making. But his main classroom has been the plate mill.

As he says . . . " It's just like flying. You're up against mass power and the forces of nature. Even to stay still, you've got to keep going . . . "

WELL PAID—AND SATISFYING

Off the job, which in view of its responsibility is well paid, even by professional standards, he likes good books and good music. In the summer he golfs. But his chief spare-time hobby is three-year-old, sloe-eyed, dark-haired Patricia Ellis McCubbin. Her middle name comes from grandfather Ben Ellis who played football years ago for Motherwell F.C.

To see Jim McCubbin and his two buddies on the other shifts, Bob Jaffrey and John Lang, putting through the plates, you might think that plate rolling is easy. But hot, plastic steel is what the Scots call " kittle stuff." The job in fact calls for as much stamina, nerve and operative skill as flying a big bomber.

That's why it's well paid. And that's one reason, though not the only one, why ex-Flight Lieutenant James McCubbin, D.F.C., went all out to be a Roller when he saw the chance.

As he says . . . " It feels as good to put in a good shift with no troubles, as to make the target and get back home."

This report was commissioned by the British Iron and Steel Federation, which believes that everyone in Britain should know the facts about Steel, and about the men and organisations that make it.

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James Agee

A Mother's Tale

THE calf ran up the little hill as fast as he could and stopped sharp. "Mama!" he cried, all out of breath. "What *is* it! What are they *doing!* Where are they *going!*"

Other spring calves came galloping too.

They were all looking up at her and awaiting her explanation, but she looked out over their excited eyes. As she watched the mysterious and majestic thing they had never seen before, her own eyes became even more than ordinarily still, and during the considerable moment before she answered, she scarcely heard their urgent questioning.

Far out along the autumn plain, beneath the sloping light, an immense drove of cattle moved eastward. They went at a walk, not very fast, but faster than they could imaginably enjoy. Those in front were compelled by those behind; those at the rear, with few exceptions, did their best to keep up; those who were locked within the herd could no more help moving than the particles inside a falling rock. Men on horses rode ahead, and alongside, and behind, or spurred their horses intensely back and forth, keeping the pace steady, and the herd in shape; and from man to man, a dog sped back and forth incessantly as a shuttle, barking, incessantly, in a hysterical voice. Now and then one of the men shouted fiercely, and this like the shrieking of the dog was tinily audible above a low and awesome sound which seemed to come not from the multitude of hooves but from the centre of the world, and above the sporadic bawlings and bellowings of the herd.

From the hillside this tumult was so distant that it only made more delicate the prodigious silence in which the earth and sky were held; and, from the hill, the sight was as modest as its sound. The herd was virtually hidden in the dust it raised, and could be known, in general, only by the horns which pricked this flat sunlit dust like little briars. In one place a twist of the air revealed the trembling fabric of many backs; but it was only along the near edge of the mass that individual animals were discernible, small in a driven frieze, walking fast, stumbling and recovering, tossing their armed heads, or opening their skulls heavenward in one of those cries which reached the hillside long after the jaws were shut.

From where she watched, the mother could not be sure whether there were any she recognised. She knew that among them there must be a son of hers; she had not seen him since some previous spring, and she would not be seeing him again. Then the cries of the young ones impinged on her bemusement: "Where are they going?"

She looked into their ignorant eyes.

"Away," she said.

"Where?" they cried. "Where? Where?" her own son cried again.

She wondered what to say.

"On a long journey."

"But where *to*?" they shouted. "Yes, where *to*?" her son exclaimed, and she could see that he was losing his patience with her, as he always did when he felt she was evasive.

"I'm not sure," she said.

THEIR silence was so cold that she was unable to avoid their eyes for long.

"Well, not *really* sure. Because, you see,"

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she said in her most reasonable tone, "I've never seen it with my own eyes, and that's the only way to *be* sure; *isn't* it?"

They just kept looking at her. She could see no way out.

"But I've *heard* about it," she said with shallow cheerfulness, "from those who *have* seen it, and I don't suppose there's any good reason to doubt them."

She looked away over them again, and for all their interest in what she was about to tell them, her eyes so changed that they turned and looked, too.

The herd, which had been moving broadside to them, was being turned away, so slowly that like the turning of stars it could not quite be seen from one moment to the next; yet soon it was moving directly away from them, and even during the little while she spoke and they all watched after it, it steadily and very noticeably diminished, and the sounds of it as well.

"It happens always about this time of year," she said quietly while they watched. "Nearly all the men and horses leave, and go into the North and the West."

"Out on the range," her son said, and by his voice she knew what enchantment the idea already held for him.

"Yes," she said, "out on the range." And trying, impossibly, to imagine the range, they were touched by the breath of grandeur.

"And then before long," she continued, "everyone has been found, and brought into one place; and then . . . what you see, happens. All of them.

"Sometimes when the wind is right," she said more quietly, "you can hear them coming long before you can see them. It isn't even like a sound, at first. It's more as if something were moving far under the ground. It makes you uneasy. You wonder, why, what in the world can *that* be! Then you remember what it is and then you can really hear it. And then, finally, there they all are."

She could see this did not interest them at all.

"But where are they *going*?" one asked, a little impatiently.

"I'm coming to that," she said; and she let them wait. Then she spoke slowly but casually.

"They are on their way to a railroad."

There, she thought; that's for that look you all gave me when I said I wasn't sure. She waited for them to ask; they waited for her to explain.

"A railroad," she told them, "is great hard bars of metal lying side by side, or so they tell me, and they go on and on over the ground as far as the eye can see. And great wagons run on the metal bars on wheels, like wagon wheels but smaller, and these wheels are made of solid metal too. The wagons are much bigger than any wagon you've ever seen, as big as, big as sheds, they say, and they are pulled along on the iron bars by a terrible huge dark machine, with a loud scream."

"Big as *sheds*?" one of the calves said sceptically.

"Big *enough*, anyway," the mother said. "I told you I've never seen it myself. But those wagons are so big that several of us can get inside at once. And that's exactly what happens."

Suddenly she became very quiet, for she felt that somehow, she could not imagine just how, she had said altogether too much.

"Well, *what* happens," her son wanted to know. "What do you mean, *happens*?"

She always tried hard to be a reasonably modern mother. It was probably better, she felt, to go on, than to leave them all full of imaginings and mystification. Besides, there was really nothing at all awful about what happened . . . if only one could know *why*.

"Well," she said, "it's nothing much, really. They just—why, when they all finally *get* there, why, there are all the great cars waiting in a long line, and the big dark machine is up ahead . . . smoke comes out of it, they say . . . and . . . well, then, they just put us into the wagons, just as many as will fit in each wagon, and when everybody is in, why. . . ." She hesitated, for again, though she couldn't be sure why, she was uneasy.

"Why then," her son said, "the train takes them away."

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HEARING that word, she felt a flinching of the heart. Where had he picked it up, she wondered, and she gave him a shy and curious glance. Oh dear, she thought. I should never have even *begun* to explain. "Yes," she said, "when everybody is safely in, they slide the doors shut."

They were all silent for a little while. Then one of them asked thoughtfully,

"Are they taking them somewhere they don't want to go?"

"Oh, I don't think so," the mother said. "I imagine it's very nice."

"*I* want to go," she heard her son say with ardour. "I want to go right now," she cried. "Can I, Mama? Can I? *Please?*" And looking into his eyes, she was overwhelmed by sadness.

"Silly thing," she said, "there'll be time enough for that when you're grown up. But what I very much hope," she went on, "is that instead of being chosen to go out on the range and to make the long journey, you will grow up to be very strong and bright so they will decide that you may stay here at home with Mother. And you, too," she added, speaking to the other little males; but she could not honestly wish this for any but her own, least of all for the eldest, strongest, and most proud, for she knew how few are chosen.

She could see that what she had said was not received with enthusiasm.

"But I want to go," her son said.

"Why?" she asked. "I don't think any of you realise that it's a great *honour* to be chosen to stay. A great privilege. Why, it's just the most ordinary ones are taken out on to the range. But only the very pick are chosen to stay here at home. If you want to go out on the range," she said in hurried and happy inspiration, "all you have to do is to be ordinary and careless and silly. If you want to have even a chance to be chosen to stay, you have to try to be stronger and bigger and braver and brighter than anyone else, and that takes *hard work*. Every day. Do you see?" And she looked happily and hopefully from one to another. "Besides," she added, aware that they were not won over, "I'm told it's a very rough life out there, and the men are unkind.

"Don't you see?" she said again: and she pretended to speak to all of them, but it was only to her son.

But he only looked at her. "Why do you want me to stay home?" he asked flatly: in their silence she knew the others were asking the same question.

"Because it's safe here," she said before she knew better; and realised she had put it in the most unfortunate way possible. "Not safe, not just that," she fumbled. "I mean... because here we *know* what happens, and what's going to happen, and there's never any doubt about it, never any reason to wonder, to worry. Don't you see? It's just *Home*," and she put a smile on the word, "where we all know each other and are happy and well."

They were so merely quiet, looking back at her, that she felt they were neither won over nor alienated. Then she knew of her son that he, anyhow, was most certainly not persuaded, for he asked the question she most dreaded: "Where do they go on the train?" And hearing him, she knew that she would stop at nothing to bring that curiosity and eagerness, and that tendency towards scepticism, within safe bounds.

"Nobody knows," she said, and she added, in just the tone she knew would most sharply engage them, "Not for sure, anyway."

"What do you mean, *not for sure*," her son cried. And the oldest, biggest calf repeated the question, his voice cracking.

THE mother deliberately kept silence as she gazed out over the plain, and while she was silent they all heard the last they would ever hear of all those who were going away: the last great cry, as faint almost as a breath; the infinitesimal jabbing vituperation of the dog: the solemn muttering of the earth.

"Well," she said, after even this sound was entirely lost, "there was one who came back." Their instant, trustful eyes were too much for her. She added, "Or so they say."

They gathered a little more closely around her, for now she spoke very quietly.

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"It was my great-grandmother who told me," she said. "She was told it by *her* great-grandmother, who claimed she saw it with her own eyes, though of course I can't vouch for that. Because of course I wasn't even dreamed of then; and Great-grandmother was so very, very old, you see, that you couldn't always be sure she knew quite *what* she was saying."

Now that she began to remember it more clearly, she was sorry she had committed herself to telling it.

"Yes," she said, "the story is, there was one, *just* one, who ever came back, and he told what happened on the train, and where the train went and what happened after. He told it all in a rush, they say, the last things first and every which way, but as it was finally sorted out and gotten into order by those who heard it and those they told it to, this is more or less what happened:

"He said that after the men had gotten just as many of us as they could into the car he was in, so that their sides pressed tightly together and nobody could lie down, they slid the door shut with a startling rattle and a bang, and then there was a sudden jerk, so strong they might have fallen except that they were packed so closely together, and the car began to move. But after it had moved only a little way, it stopped as suddenly as it had started, so that they all nearly fell down again. You see, they were just moving up the next car that was joined on behind, to put more of us into it. He could see it all between the boards of the car, because the boards were built a little apart from each other, to let in air."

Car, her son said again to himself. Now he would never forget the word.

"He said that then, for the first time in his life, he became very badly frightened, he didn't know why. But he was sure, at that moment, that there was something dreadfully to be afraid of. The others felt this same great fear. They called out loudly to those who were being put into the car behind, and the others called back, but it was no use; those who were getting aboard were between narrow white fences and then were walking up a narrow slope and the men kept jabbing them as they do when they are in an unkind humour, and there was no way to go but on into the car. There was no way to get out of the car, either: he tried, with all his might, and he was the one nearest the door.

"After the next car behind was full, and the door was shut, the train jerked forward again, and stopped again, and they put more of us into still another car, and so on, and on, until all the starting and stopping no longer frightened anybody; it was just something uncomfortable that was never going to stop, and they began instead to realise how hungry and thirsty they were. But there was no food and no water, so they just had to put up with this; and about the time they became resigned to going without their suppers (for by now it was almost dark), they heard a sudden and terrible scream which frightened them even more deeply than anything had frightened them before, and the train began to move again, and they braced their legs once more for the jolt when it would stop, but this time, instead of stopping, it began to go fast, and then even faster, so fast that the ground nearby slid past like a flooded creek and the whole country, he claimed, began to move too, turning slowly around a far mountain as if it were all one great wheel. And then there was a strange kind of disturbance inside the car, he said, or even inside his very bones. He felt as if everything in him was *falling*, as if he had been filled full of a heavy liquid that all wanted to flow one way, and all the others were leaning as he was leaning, away from this queer heaviness that was trying to pull them over, and then just as suddenly this leaning heaviness was gone and they nearly fell again before they could stop leaning against it. He could never understand what this was, but it too happened so many times that they all got used to it, just as they got used to seeing the country turn like a slow wheel, and just as they got used to the long cruel screams of the engine, and the steady iron noise beneath them which made the cold darkness so fearsome, and the hunger and the thirst and the continual standing up,

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and the moving on and on and on as if they would never stop.

"*Didn't* they ever stop?" one asked.

"Once in a great while," she replied. "Each time they did," she said, "he thought, 'Oh, now *at last! At last* we can get out and stretch our tired legs and lie down! *At last* we'll be given food and water!' But they never let them out. And they never gave them food or water. They never even cleaned up under them. They had to stand in their manure and in the water they made."

"WHY did the train stop?" her son asked; and with sombre gratification she saw that he was taking all this very much to heart.

"He could never understand why," she said. "Sometimes men would walk up and down alongside the cars, and the more nervous and the more trustful of us would call out; but they were only looking around, they never seemed to do anything. Sometimes he could see many houses and bigger buildings together where people lived. Sometimes it was far out in the country and after they had stood still for a long time they would hear a little noise which quickly became louder, and then became suddenly a noise so loud it stopped their breathing, and during this noise something black would go by, very close, and so fast it couldn't be seen. And then it was gone as suddenly as it had appeared, and the noise became small, and then in the silence their train would start up again.

"Once, he tells us, something very strange happened. They were standing still, and cars of a very different kind began to move slowly past. These cars were not red, but black, with many glass windows like those in a house; and he says they were as full of human beings as the car he was in was full of our kind. And one of these people looked into his eyes and smiled, as if he liked him, or as if he knew only too well how hard the journey was.

"So by his account it happens to them, too," she said, with a certain pleased vindictiveness. "Only they were sitting down at their ease, not standing. And the one who smiled was eating."

She was still, trying to think of something; she couldn't quite grasp the thought.

"But didn't they *ever* let them out?" her son asked.

The oldest calf jeered. "Of *course* they did. He came back, didn't he? How would he ever come back if he didn't get out?"

"They didn't let them out," she said, "for a long, long time."

"How long?"

"So long, and he was so tired, he could never quite be sure. But he said that it turned from night to day and from day to night and back again several times over, with the train moving nearly all of this time, and that when it finally stopped, early one morning, they were all so tired and so discouraged that they hardly even noticed any longer, let alone felt any hope that anything would change for them, ever again; and then all of a sudden men came up and put up a wide walk and unbarred the door and slid it open, and it was the most wonderful and happy moment of his life when he saw the door open, and walked into the open air with all his joints trembling, and drank the water and ate the delicious food they had ready for him; it was worth the whole terrible journey."

Now that these scenes came clear before her, there was a faraway shining in her eyes, and her voice, too, had something in it of the faraway.

"When they had eaten and drunk all they could hold they lifted up their heads and looked around, and everything they saw made them happy. Even the trains made them cheerful now, for now they were no longer afraid of them. And though these trains were forever breaking to pieces and joining again with other broken pieces, with shufflings and clashings and rude cries, they hardly paid them attention any more, they were so pleased to be in their new home, and so surprised and delighted to find they were among thousands upon thousands of strangers of their own kind, all lifting up their voices in peacefulness and thanksgiving, and they were so wonderstruck by all they

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could see, it was so beautiful and so grand.

"For he has told us that now they lived among fences as white as bone, so many, and so spiderishly complicated, and shining so pure, that there's no use trying even to hint at the beauty and the splendour of it to anyone who knows only the pitiful little outfittings of a ranch. Beyond these mazy fences, through the dark and bright smoke which continually turned along the sunlight, dark buildings stood shoulder to shoulder in a wall as huge and proud as mountains. All through the air, all the time, there was an iron humming like the humming of the iron bar after it has been struck to tell the men it is time to eat, and in all the air, all the time, there was that same strange kind of iron strength which makes the silence before lightning so different from all other silence.

"Once for a little while the wind shifted and blew over them straight from the great buildings, and it brought a strange and very powerful smell which confused and disturbed them. He could never quite describe this smell, but he has told us it was unlike anything he had ever known before. It smelled like old fire, he said, and old blood and fear and darkness and sorrow and most terrible and brutal force and something else, something in it that made him want to run away. This sudden uneasiness and this wish to run away swept through every one of them, he tells us, so that they were all moved at once as restlessly as so many leaves in a wind, and there was great worry in their voices. But soon the leaders among them concluded that it was simply the way men must smell when there are a great many of them living together. Those dark buildings must be crowded very full of men, they decided, probably as many thousands of them, indoors, as there were of us, outdoors; so it was no wonder their smell was so strong and, to our kind, so unpleasant. Besides, it was so clear now in every other way that men were not as we had always supposed, but were doing everything they knew how to make us comfortable and happy, that we ought to just put up with their smell, which after all they couldn't help, any more than we could help our own. Very likely men didn't like the way we smelled, any more than we liked theirs. They passed along these ideas to the others, and soon everyone felt more calm, and then the wind changed again, and the fierce smell no longer came to them, and the smell of their own kind was back again, very strong, of course, in such a crowd, but ever so homey and comforting, and everyone felt easy again.

"They were fed and watered so generously, and treated so well, and the majesty and the loveliness of this place where they had all come to rest was so far beyond anything they had ever known or dreamed of, that many of the simple and ignorant, whose memories were short, began to wonder whether that whole difficult journey, or even their whole lives up to now, had ever really been. Hadn't it all been just shadows, they murmured, just a bad dream?

"Even the sharp ones, who knew very well it had all really happened, began to figure that everything up to now had been made so full of pain only so that all they had come to now might seem all the sweeter and the more glorious. Some of the oldest and deepest were even of a mind that all the puzzle and tribulation of the journey had been sent us as a kind of harsh trying or proving of our worthiness; and that it was entirely fitting and proper that we could earn our way through to such rewards as these, only through suffering, and through being patient under pain which was beyond our understanding; and that now at the last, to those who had borne all things well, all things were made known: for the mystery of suffering stood revealed in joy. And now as they looked back over all that was past, all their sorrows and bewilderments seemed so little and so fleeting that, from the simplest among them even to the most wise, they could feel only the kind of amused pity we feel toward the very young when, with the first thing that hurts them or they are forbidden, they are sure there is nothing kind or fair in all creation, and carry on accordingly, raving and grieving as if their hearts would break."

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She glanced among them with an indulgent smile, hoping the little lesson would sink home. They seemed interested but somewhat dazed. I'm talking way over their heads, she realised. But by now she herself was too deeply absorbed in her story to modify it much. *Let* it be, she thought, a little impatient; it's over *my* head, for that matter.

"They had hardly before this even wondered that they were alive," she went on, "and now all of a sudden they felt they understood *why* they were. This made them very happy, but they were still only beginning to enjoy this new wisdom when quite a new and different kind of restiveness ran among them. Before they quite knew it they were all moving once again, and now they realised that they were being moved, once more, by men, toward still some other place and purpose they could not know. But during these last hours they had been so well that now they felt no uneasiness, but all moved forward calm and sure towards better things still to come; he has told us that he no longer felt as if he were being driven, even as it became clear that they were going toward the shade of those great buildings, but guided.

"He was guided between fences which stood ever more and more narrowly near each other, among companions who were pressed ever more and more closely against one another; and now as he felt their warmth against him it was not uncomfortable, and his pleasure in it was not through any need to be close among others through anxiousness, but was a new kind of strong and gentle delight, at being so very close, so deeply of his own kind, that it seemed as if the very breath and heartbeat of each one were being exchanged through all that multitude, and each was another, and others were each, and each was a multitude, and the multitude was one. And quieted and made mild within this melting, they now entered the cold shadow cast by the buildings, and now with every step the smell of the buildings grew stronger, and in the darkening air the glittering of the fences was ever more queer.

"And now as they were pressed ever more intimately together he could see ahead of him a narrow gate, and he was strongly pressed upon from either side and from behind, and went in eagerly, and now he was between two fences so narrowly set that he brushed either fence with either flank, and walked alone, seeing just one other ahead of him, and knowing of just one other behind him, and for a moment the strange thought came to him, that the one ahead was his father, and that the one behind was the son he had never begotten.

"And now the light was so changed that he knew he must have come inside one of the gloomy and enormous buildings, and the smell was so much stronger that it seemed almost to burn his nostrils, and the smell and the sombre new light blended together and became some other thing again, beyond his describing to us except to say that the whole air beat with it like one immense heart and it was as if the beating of this heart were pure violence infinitely manifolded upon violence: so that the uneasy feeling stirred in him again that it would be wise to turn around and run out of this place just as fast and as far as ever he could go. This he heard, as if he were telling it to himself at the top of his voice, but it came from somewhere so deep and so dark inside him that he could only hear the shouting of it as less than a whisper, as just a hot and chilling breath, and he scarcely heeded it, there was so much else to attend to.

"For as he walked along in this sudden and complete loneliness, he tells us, this wonderful knowledge of being one with all his race meant less and less to him, and in its place came something still more wonderful: he knew what it was to be himself alone, a creature separate and different from any other, who had never been before, and would never be again. He could feel this in his whole weight as he walked, and in each foot as he put it down and gave his weight to it and moved above it, and in every muscle as he moved, and it was a pride which lifted him up and made him feel large, and a pleasure which pierced him through. And as he began with such wondering delight to be aware of his own exact singleness in this world, he

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also began to understand (or so he thought) just why these fences were set so very narrow, and just why he was walking all by himself. It stole over him, he tells us, like the feeling of a slow cool wind, that he was being guided toward some still more wonderful reward or revealing, up ahead, which he could not of course imagine, but he was sure it was being held in store for him alone.

"Just then the one ahead of him fell down with a great sigh, and was so quickly taken out of the way that he did not even have to shift the order of his hooves as he walked on. The sudden fall and the sound of that sigh dismayed him, though, and something within him told him that it would be wise to look up: and there he saw Him.

"A little bridge ran crosswise above the fences. He stood on this bridge with His feet as wide apart as He could set them. He wore spattered trousers but from the belt up He was naked and as wet as rain. Both arms were raised high above His head and in both hands He held an enormous Hammer. With a grunt which was hardly like the voice of a human being, and with all His strength, He brought this Hammer down into the forehead of our friend: who, in a blinding blazing, heard from his own mouth the beginning of a gasping sigh; then there was only darkness."

O, this is *enough!* it's *enough!* she cried out within herself, seeing their terrible young eyes. How *could* she have been so foolish as to tell so much!

"What happened then?" she heard, in the voice of the oldest calf, and she was horrified. This shining in their eyes: was it only excitement? no pity? no fear?

"What happened?" two others asked.

Very well, she said to herself. I've gone so far; now I'll go the rest of the way. She decided not to soften it, either. She'd teach them a lesson they wouldn't forget in a hurry.

"Very well," she was surprised to hear herself say aloud.

"How long he lay in this darkness he couldn't know, but when he began to come out of it, all he knew was the most unspeakably dreadful pain. He was upside down and very slowly swinging and turning, for he was hanging by the tendons of his heels from great frightful hooks, and he has told us that the feeling was as if his hide were being torn from him inch by inch, in one piece. And then as he became more clearly aware he found that this was exactly what was happening. Knives would sliver and slice along both flanks, between the hide and the living flesh; then there was a moment of most precious relief; then red hands seized his hide and there was a jerking of the hide and a tearing of tissue which it was almost as terrible to hear as to feel, turning his whole body and the poor head at the bottom of it; and then the knives again.

"It was so far beyond anything he had ever known unnatural and amazing that he hung there through several more such slicings and jerkings and tearings before he was fully able to take it all in: then, with a scream, and a supreme straining of all his strength, he tore himself from the hooks and collapsed sprawling to the floor and, scrambling right to his feet, charged the men with the knives. For just a moment they were so astonished and so terrified they could not move. Then they moved faster than he had ever known men could—and so did all the other men who chanced to be in his way. He ran down a glowing floor of blood and down endless corridors which were hung with the bleeding carcases of our kind and with bleeding fragments of carcases, among blood-clothed men who carried bleeding weapons, and out of that vast room into the open, and over and through one fence after another, shoving aside many an astounded stranger and shouting out warnings as he ran, and away up the railroad towards the West.

"How he ever managed to get away, and how he ever found his way home, we can only try to guess. It's told that he scarcely knew, himself, by the time he came to this part of his story. He was impatient with those who interrupted him to ask about that, he had so much more important things to tell them, and by then he was so exhausted and so far gone that he could say nothing very clear

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about the little he did know. But we can realise that he must have had really tremendous strength, otherwise he couldn't have outlived the Hammer; and that strength such as his—which we simply don't see these days, it's of the olden time—is capable of things our own strongest and bravest would sicken to dream of. But there was something even stronger than his strength. There was his righteous fury, which nothing could stand up against, which brought him out of that fearful place. And there was his high and burning and heroic purpose, to keep him safe along the way, and to guide him home, and to keep the breath of life in him until he could warn us. He did manage to tell us that he just followed the railroad, but how he chose one among the many which branched out of that place, he couldn't say. He told us, too, that from time to time he recognised shapes of mountains and other landmarks, from his journey by train, all reappearing backward and with a changed look and hard to see, too (for he was shrewd enough to travel mostly at night), but still recognisable. But that isn't enough to account for it. For he has told us, too, that he simply *knew* the way; that he didn't hesitate one moment in choosing the right line of railroad, or even think of it as choosing; and that the landmarks didn't really guide him, but just made him the more sure of what he was already sure of; and that whenever he *did* encounter human beings—and during the later stages of his journey, when he began to doubt he would live to tell us, he travelled day and night—they never so much as moved to make him trouble, but stopped dead in their tracks, and their jaws fell open.

"And surely we can't wonder that their jaws fell open. I'm sure yours would, if you had seen him as he arrived, and I'm very glad I wasn't there to see it, either, even though it is said to be the greatest and most momentous day of all the days that ever were or shall be. For we have the testimony of eye-witnesses, how he looked, and it is only too vivid, even to hear of. He came up out of the East as much staggering as galloping (for by now he was so worn out by pain and exertion and loss of blood that he could hardly stay upright), and his heels were so piteously torn by the hooks that his hooves doubled under more often than not, and in his broken forehead the mark of the Hammer was like the socket for a third eye.

"He came to the meadow where the great trees made shade over the water. 'Bring them all together!' he cried out, as soon as he could find breath. 'All!' Then he drank; and then he began to speak to those who were already there: for as soon as he saw himself in the water it was as clear to him as it was to those who watched him that there was no time left to send for the others. His hide was all gone from his head and his neck and his forelegs and his chest and most of one side and a part of the other side. It was flung backward from his naked muscles by the wind of his running and now it lay around him in the dust like a ragged garment. They say there is no imagining how terrible and in some way how grand the eyeball is when the skin has been taken entirely from around it: his eyes, which were bare in this way, also burned with pain, and with the final energies of his life, and with his desperate concern to warn us while he could: and he rolled his eyes wildly while he talked, or looked piercingly from one to another of the listeners, interrupting himself to cry out, '*Believe* me! Oh, *believe* me!' For it had evidently never occurred to him that he might not be believed, and must make this last great effort, in addition to all he had gone through for us, to *make* himself believed; so that he groaned with sorrow and with rage and railed at them without tact or mercy for their slowness to believe. He had scarcely what you could call a voice left, but with this relic of a voice he shouted and bellowed and bullied us and insulted us, in the agony of his concern. While he talked he bled from the mouth, and the mingled blood and saliva hung from his chin like the beard of a goat.

"Some say that with his naked face, and his savage eyes, and that beard and the hide lying off his bare shoulders like shabby clothing, he looked almost human. But others feel

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this is an irreverence even to think; and others, that it is a poor compliment to pay the one who told us, at such cost to himself, the true ultimate purpose of Man. Some did not believe he had ever come from our ranch in the first place, and of course he was so different from us in appearance and even in his voice, and so changed from what he might ever have looked or sounded like before, that nobody could recognise him for sure, though some were sure they did. Others suspected that he had been sent among us with his story for some mischievous and cruel purpose, and the fact that they could not imagine what this purpose might be, made them, naturally, all the more suspicious. Some believed he was actually a man, trying—and none too successfully, they said—to disguise himself as one of us; and again the fact that they could not imagine why a man would do this, made them all the more uneasy. There were quite a few who doubted that anyone who could get into such bad condition as he was in, was fit even to give reliable information, let alone advice, to those in good health. And some whispered, even while he spoke, that he had turned lunatic; and many came to believe this. It wasn't only that his story was so fantastic; there was good reason to wonder, many felt, whether anybody in his right mind would go to such trouble for others. But even those who did not believe him listened intently, out of curiosity to hear so wild a tale, and out of the respect it is only proper to show any creature who is in the last agony.

"What he told, was what I have just told you. But his purpose was away beyond just the telling. When they asked questions, no matter how curious or suspicious or idle or foolish, he learned, towards the last, to answer them with all the patience he could and in all the detail he could remember. He even invited them to examine his wounded heels and the pulsing wound in his head as closely as they pleased. He even begged them to, for he knew that before everything else, he must be believed. For unless we could believe him, wherever could we find any reason, or enough courage, to do the hard and dreadful things he told us we must do!

"It was only these things he cared about. Only for these he came back."

Now clearly remembering what these things were, she felt her whole being quail. She looked at the young ones quickly and as quickly looked away.

"While he talked," she went on, "and our ancestors listened, men came quietly among us; one of them shot him. Whether he was shot in kindness or to silence him is an endlessly disputed question which will probably never be settled. Whether, even, he died of the shot, or through his own great pain and weariness (for his eyes, they say, were glazing for some time before the men came), we will never be sure. Some suppose even that he may have died of his sorrow and his concern for us. Others feel that he had quite enough to die of, without that. All these things are tangled and lost in the disputes of those who love to theorise and to argue. There is no arguing about his dying words, though; they were very clearly remembered:

"*'Tell them! Believe!'*"

AFTER a while her son asked, "What did he tell them to do?"

She avoided his eyes. "There's a great deal of disagreement about that, too," she said after a moment. "You see, he was so very tired."

They were silent.

"So tired," she said, "some think that towards the end, he really *must* have been out of his mind."

"Why?" asked her son.

"Because he was so tired out and so badly hurt."

They looked at her mistrustfully.

"And because of what he told us to do."

"What did he tell us to do?" her son asked again.

Her throat felt dry. "Just . . . things you can hardly bear even to think of. That's all."

They waited. "Well, *what*?" her son asked in a cold, accusing voice.

"'*Each one is himself*,'" she said shyly. "'*Not of the herd. Himself alone.*' That's one."

"What else?"

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" 'Obey nobody. Depend on none.' "

"What else?"

She found that she was moved. " *'Break down the fences,'* " she said less shyly. " *'Tell everybody, everywhere.'* "

"Where?"

"Everywhere. You see, he thought there must be ever so many more of us than we had ever known."

They were silent. "What else?" her son asked.

" 'For if even a few do not hear me, or disbelieve me, we are all betrayed.' "

"Betrayed?"

"He meant, doing as men want us to. Not for ourselves, or the good of each other."

They were puzzled.

"Because, you see, he felt there was no other way." Again her voice altered: *" 'All who are put on the range are put on to trains. All who are put on to trains meet the Man With The Hammer. All who stay home are kept there to breed others to go on to the range, and so betray themselves and their kind and their children for ever.*

" 'We are brought into this life only to be victims; and there is no other way for us unless we save ourselves.'

"Do you understand?"

Still they were puzzled, she saw; and no wonder, poor things. But now the ancient lines rang in her memory, terrible and brave. They made her somehow proud. She began actually to want to say them.

" 'Never be taken,' " she said. *" 'Never be driven. Let those who can, kill Man. Let those who cannot, avoid him.' "*

She looked around at them.

"What else?" her son asked, and in his voice there was a rising valour.

She looked straight into his eyes. " *'Kill the yearlings,'* " she said very gently. *" 'Kill the calves.' "*

She saw the valour leave his eyes.

"Kill us?"

She nodded. " *'So long as Man holds dominion over us,'* " she said. And in dread and amazement she heard herself add, " *'Bear no young.'* "

With this they all looked at her at once in such a way that she loved her child, and all these others, as never before; and there dilated within her such a sorrowful and marvelling grandeur that for a moment she saw nothing, and heard nothing except her own inward whisper, "Why, *I* am one alone. And of the herd, too. Both at once. All one."

Her son's voice brought her back: "Did they do what he told them to?"

The oldest one scoffed, "Would we be here, if they had?"

"They say some did," the mother replied. "Some tried. Not all."

"What did the men do to them?" another asked.

"I don't know," she said. "It was such a very long time ago."

"Do you believe it?" asked the oldest calf.

"There are some who believe it," she said.

"Do *you*?"

"I'm told that far back in the wildest corners of the range there are some of us, mostly very, very old ones, who have never been taken. It's said that they meet, every so often, to talk and just to think together about the heroism and the terror of two sublime Beings, The One Who Came Back, and The Man With The Hammer. Even here at home, some of the old ones, and some of us who are just old-fashioned, believe it, or parts of it anyway. I know there are some who say that a hollow at the centre of the forehead—a sort of shadow of the Hammer's blow—is a sign of very special ability. And I remember how Great-grandmother used to sing an old, pious song, let's see now, yes, 'Be not like dumb-driven cattle, be a hero in the strife.' But there aren't many. Not any more."

"Do *you* believe it?" the oldest calf insisted; and now she was touched to realise that every one of them, from the oldest to the youngest, needed very badly to be sure about that.

"Of course not, silly," she said; and all at once she was overcome by a most curious shyness, for it occurred to her that in the course of time, this young thing might be bred to her. "It's just an old, old legend." With a tender little laugh she added, lightly, "We use it to frighten children with."

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By now the light was long on the plain and the herd was only a fume of gold near the horizon. Behind it, dung steamed, and dust sank gently to the shattered ground. She looked far away for a moment, wondering. Something—it was like a forgotten word on the tip of the tongue. She felt the sudden chill of the late afternoon and she wondered what she had been wondering about. "Come, children," she said briskly, "it's high time for supper." And she turned away; they followed.

THE trouble was, her son was thinking, you could never trust her. If she said a thing was so, she was probably just trying to get her way with you. If she said a thing wasn't so, it probably was so. But you never could be sure. Not without seeing for yourself. I'm going to go, he told himself; I don't care *what* she wants. And if it isn't so, why then I'll live on the range and make the great journey and find out what *is* so. And if what she told was true, why then I'll know ahead of time and the one *I* will charge is The Man With The Hammer. I'll put Him and His Hammer out of the way for ever, and that will make me an even better hero than The One Who Came Back.

So, when his mother glanced at him in concern, not quite daring to ask her question, he gave her his most docile smile, and snuggled his head against her, and she was comforted.

The littlest and youngest of them was doing double skips in his efforts to keep up with her. Now that he wouldn't be interrupting her, and none of the big ones would hear and make fun of him, he shyly whispered his question, so warmly moistly ticklish that she felt as if he were licking her ear.

"What is it, darling?" she asked, bending down.

"What's a train?"

Cyril Connolly

A wife, a house, a car

A wife, a house, a car,
How excellent they are!
Crown of a well-spent life,
One car, *one* house, *one* wife.

Upspoke a London mouse:

"*Standard* and evening *Star*,
A nuclear pall for me
And gloaming at the bar—
Champaign's my allergy!

Home farm and cottage cold
The cake-eater enfold:
Wall-flower and snapdragon,
Vauxhall and volkswagen,
Fond wife and mistress pert
Consume the introvert
Or make perpetual plain . . .

Proud mouse had never such bane."

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Colin Clark

What's Wrong with Economics?

From fallacy to fallacy in one generation

SOME economists may profess themselves satisfied with the present state of their science. If so, they have only to question one or two ordinarily intelligent outsiders to be rudely disillusioned. Why, they will be asked, are economists unable to agree on what should be done to stop the continuous rise of prices?* No doubt the economist will put blame upon the politicians, and well he may. But he is committing a grave falsehood if he tries to convey the impression that the economists know and have said what should be done, and that the politicians have refused to do it. The politicians, with all their faults, are fully entitled to reply that they have not been given a clear and unanimous lead (indeed they may well ask whether they have been given any lead at all) by the economists in this matter.

Just as Britain has traditionally led the world in economic thought, so British prices also now lead the world in their upward trend. Apart from the South American republics, where things never seem to go right, and Australia and New Zealand, where wages are fixed by a system of arbitration whose cardinal principle is that trade unions need never accept the results of arbitration if they do not like it, there are no other industrially developed countries where prices, since the ending of the world commodity price boom in 1951, have been rising as fast as in Britain. The social evils which follow should be apparent even to the dullest: the waste and extravagance which come from business profits too easily earned; the destruction of the endowments of churches, universities, and similar bodies; as many people now on the Poor Law (even if we have renamed it National Assistance) as in the worst years of the depression, the old and infirm now being the principal sufferers; etc.

What sort of impression will these happenings make upon modern historians twenty years hence, who will be trying to describe the strange course of events of the 1950's? Sympathetic as they will doubtless be to the

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* We should avoid altogether the use of the word "inflation," now used *ad nauseam* in political speeches, leading articles, and inferior economic treatises. While this word now to many people carries the meaning simply of "rising prices," its original meaning was a rise in prices brought about by an expansion of the supply of money (notes or coin). The word was later redefined to mean also a rise in prices brought about by an expansion of the supply of bank money. To many hearers the word still carries an obscure connotation of one or more of these original meanings. An expansion of the supply of coin, notes, or bank money has often caused prices to rise; but it is a very serious error to imagine that these are the sole, or even the predominant causes at work, or that a reduction in the supply of money would necessarily stop prices rising.

Obscurity of expression in economics is something which must be mercilessly hunted down and for that reason the word "inflation" (together with "standard of living" and many other old favourites) should be perpetually banished from all future discussions. The phrases "expansion of the money supply," "fall in the value of money," "rising prices," and (what is not quite the same thing) "rising costs" are (for our present purposes) clear and sufficient.

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economists of the 1950's (many of whom will still be surviving), they will nevertheless be bound to conclude that these years were a period of complacent short-sightedness, the blind leading the blind, economists and politicians alike falling into the ditch.

This harsh judgment will be paralleled in their minds by that on a contrasted period, which social historians of the present day should be describing (but how few of them are), namely the 1930's. During this decade, tens of millions of men throughout the world rotted away their lives in needless unemployment. But, once again, with very few exceptions, the economists of the world had not the least idea of what to do, and were telling the political leaders of those days, and the unemployed, that it was quite impossible to do anything about unemployment at all, apart from some very minor alleviations. Keynes in those days was a very isolated figure, disliked by Labour politicians almost as much as by Conservatives.* After the publication of his *General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* in 1936, his ideas began to spread among the younger academic economists. But all the economists in positions of influence at that time, advisers to governments and banks, or writers in influential periodicals, right up to 1939, rejected his ideas and did their utmost to prevent their dissemination.

That Keynes's ideas, hopelessly vulgarised, "turned sour and silly, and mixed with very ancient errors," as he himself wrote immediately before his death in 1946, should have released political forces the world over which were committed to the equally grave tragedy of a perpetually falling value of money, is one of the great disasters of our time. One reason for it was that Keynes himself had so little understanding of politics. Being, despite his brusque and aggressive demeanour (I write as a personal friend), a truly humble man, Keynes greatly underrated the effect which his own writings were to have upon world opinion, which was to seize upon his ideas and exaggerate them beyond all reason.

But even after we have made all allowances for the short-sightedness of politicians, and the unpredictable consequences of Keynes's writings, we are still a long way from explaining the collective blindness of economists alike to the evils of avoidable unemployment in the 1930's, and of rising prices in the 1950's. The measures which could and should have been taken to restore full employment in the 1930's are now obvious to a second-year undergraduate. But at the time, apparently, they were concealed even from the most wise and prudent. And in the 1970's the measures which economists ought to be advocating now will be equally obvious. How have the professional economists, who carry such a heavy responsibility for the world's welfare, managed to miss the bus twice?

An interesting piece of economic theory, not only a theorem, but also in certain circumstances a source of practical recommendations on marketing policy, deals with what is known as "The Cobweb." To take an actual instance: The price of raspberries (or of some other products where new cultivations take a year or two before they yield) may rise. A large number of farmers will then establish further raspberry plantations. When their fruit eventually comes on to the market, it will be sufficient to depress the price considerably. The consequence will then be that some of the less productive plantations will be ploughed under, and few new ones made. Under certain circumstances (the precise definition of the circumstances under which this is likely to happen is a difficult matter) the price may then rise again, and prices and supplies, for some years at any rate, may go on oscillating in widening circles, like a spider completing a cobweb, instead of heading for a central point of equilibrium.

It may be rather shocking to suggest that economists themselves have fallen into the same sort of trap as that which nature has spread for simple-minded raspberry farmers. But this indeed does seem to be the case. And

* It should be stated that one of Keynes's few loyal supporters at that time, even before the publication of the "General Theory," was Mr. Harold Macmillan.

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when the economists—collectively, like the farmers—have committed their errors of excess or defect, being apparently more slow-minded than farmers, they adhere to their errors not just for a year or two but for a decade or more at a time, while the world suffers quite incomparably more than it does from a temporary glut or shortage of raspberries. People often make rude jokes about British generals always having been ready to fight the last war but one. But economists, collectively, can be quite as slow-minded as generals.

In the world in which I grew up, in the first two decades of this century, economic opinion had been badly shaken by two succeeding acute American banking crises, in 1893 and in 1907. The maintenance of the liquidity and stability of the banking system was, in those days, a matter of greater concern to economists than was anything else. So the great rise in prices which swept over the world with the war of 1914, and which in many countries persisted into the 1920's, took them all by surprise. In this case, much of the rise had been simply due to inflation in the literal sense, to an excessive issue of paper money. At that time—it may seem incredible, but full confirmation is given in the writings of Gustav Cassell, one of the few contemporary economists who understood what was going on—most central bankers quite failed to see the connection between excessive note issue and rising prices. The complete and final collapse of the German currency in 1923, when eventually one new mark had to be issued in exchange for 1,000,000,000 old marks, an event which had incalculable political consequences for the world, was presided over by economists, in the German Treasury and in the Reichsbank, who denied that the issue of paper money had anything to do with the rise in prices, which they attributed to inadequate exports and a deteriorating exchange rate.

This ends the first chapter of our story, or, to use our previous simile, one arm of the cobweb. Economic thought now started to change direction—but still was not aiming for the true centre. In the 1920's the avoidance of "inflation" became the great object of economic policy. And this idea comprehended not merely the excessive issue of paper money or bank credit, but also anything tending to a rise in prices or costs, falling exchange rates, or loss of gold reserves. It was now that the evil idea began to spread that unemployment, while it might be somewhat regrettable, was a far lesser evil than was any rise in prices or costs, or loss of gold reserves, or fall in the exchange rate. Sir Winston Churchill brought Britain back on to the gold standard in 1925, in a way which demonstrably made a solution of the problem of unemployment more difficult, and carried with it the threat of really dangerous industrial disputes, which in fact broke out when attempts were made to reduce wages in 1926. But it can be said in defence of Sir Winston, who after all never really found economics a very interesting subject, that the voice of Keynes as a critic at that time was entirely solitary, and his action was supported by the unanimous advice of bankers, civil servants, financial journalists, and academic economists.

These were the mental aberrations which were to condemn many countries in the 1920's, and almost the whole world in the 1930's, to devastating unemployment. (An exception was Soviet Russia, where in 1930 "unemployment was abolished as an administrative category," which is another way of saying that the unemployed were sent off to compulsory labour at jobs chosen for them by somebody else.) At a time when unemployment was becoming really serious, in 1930, Lord Norman, the Governor of the Bank of England, as indicated in his recent biography, when asked with the greatest tact and consideration to give evidence before the official Macmillan Committee on Finance and Industry, regarded the request as an affront. He delayed giving evidence as long as he possibly could, and when he finally appeared before the Committee, rude, blustering, and bewildered, he said that he did not see that financial policy had anything whatever to do with unemployment. And the Labour Government of that day was so confused in its own mind that it did not say him nay. In

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1931, when the situation was plunging to real disaster, with ten to twenty per cent of the entire labour force in the leading industrial countries unemployed, many leading and influential British economists, particularly at the London School of Economics, were still saying that the great danger was "inflation," and that government and private spending ought to be still further reduced.

The miseries of unnecessary unemployment in the 1930's were brought to an end, before the decade terminated, in two countries, Germany and Japan. Their economists did grasp the point that in a time of widespread unemployment the correct thing to do was to unbalance the budget, to spend government money freely on objects at the time deemed desirable, and to encourage private investment. The fact that the object of Germany and Japan was preparation for a world war does not vitiate this conclusion; if they had spent the money on peaceful objects they could have restored full employment equally well. But other countries required the actual outbreak of a world war before they could be convinced that it was desirable that employment should be made available to those who were willing to work, and that the preservation of gold reserves, while of some importance, was definitely a secondary matter.

LOOKING in retrospect at the ideas of economists and statesmen of those days, with all the frightful consequences which flowed from them, one may well feel inclined to accuse them of criminal irresponsibility, or at least of mild insanity.

This is now generally realised. In 1940—we can date the turning point precisely from Sir Winston Churchill's decision to appoint Keynes as one of the principal advisers to the Treasury—occurred another of these sharp changes of direction in economic opinion. The spider was starting on another arm of the cobweb, and once again aiming away from the true centre. From the Treasury in Whitehall, Keynes's ideas—becoming diluted, distorted, and vulgarised as they went—spread over the world with astonishing rapidity, war or no war. No economist has suffered so much as Keynes from his popularisers and vulgarisers. Writers popularising *laissez-faire* economics in the early 19th century, grotesque though they were, fell far short of the debased Keynesian economics which began to circulate, even during his lifetime. In the United States the well-known tendency of Americans to go to extremes, in one direction or the other, produced a weird school called the Stagnationists. Using a grossly over-simplified version of Keynes's theories, these taught that the economy, not only of Britain and France, but also of the United States, had by now become "mature," and could not expect to make any further progress, or even to keep its people employed, without an immense permanent programme of Government expenditure, and Government regulation of almost every detail of economic life. This grotesque doctrine found considerable support in American universities. It has by now been finally discredited by the force of events, but not before it had done considerable harm.

The aberrations of British thought however, though milder, have been more persistent, and in the long run may do even more harm.

Keynes and his disciples had at first taught that the right way of dealing with unemployment and inadequate demand was substantial Government expenditure on useful public works—the line which Keynes had persuaded Lloyd George to follow, rather shakily, in the 1929 election. Later, they came to realise that the same object could often be more conveniently attained without any great increase in Government expenditure, by keeping expenditure constant and reducing taxation, or just allowing a budget deficit to grow. In the post-World War II years there was of course no generalised unemployment to be dealt with in this way. The problems of these years were the exact opposite—labour shortages, inadequate supplies of goods, and rising prices. So Keynes's disciples, anxious to employ his theories, worked out a converse proposition which seemed to them an obvious truism, though in fact it is

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often false, and sometimes extremely dangerous—Keynes himself never gave any sort of support to it. If a Budget deficit is the right way to deal with under-employment, so Keynes's followers reasoned, then surely the right way to deal with over-employment and rising prices is to have a Budget surplus. This was the policy of Sir Stafford Cripps. It still seems to be the outlook of many of those who have an influential voice in formulating economic policy at the Treasury. High taxation, it was thought, would provide the necessary cure, by reducing purchasing power, for any tendency to over-employment, labour shortage, and rising prices. There was an almost universal failure to recognise that, while a rise in taxation might be temporarily effective in reducing purchasing power and easing the pressure on supplies and costs, it might, if continued for any length of time, have further consequences, which could cause costs again to rise and make the situation worse. Keynes agreed with me on this point (in a private letter dated 1st May, 1944).

In 1949 I was invited by Sir Stafford Cripps to join his economic staff at the Treasury. I had to reply that I did not think that it would be any use my coming because I did not think that he and I could agree on the fundamental question of what constituted the economic limits of taxation. Yes, he replied, with a curious John Bullishness, he knew what I had written on the subject, and thought that so far as other countries were concerned, it was probably true; but that there were no limits to the amount of taxation which the Englishman could stand.

In the 1930's, as we can all now see perfectly clearly, the first duty of economists should have been to devise measures which would increase purchasing power and demand. It is a strong awareness of the errors of their predecessors, and of their almost infinitely harmful consequences, which is causing the present generation of economists to do the opposite. Including the dangerous idea that taxation is a suitable and precise instrument for keeping demand adjusted to supply, most of the teaching of economics in universities now, and much of the discussion in learned journals, is concerned with maintaining the adequacy of demand, and keeping it nicely adjusted when costs and prices go on rising in a spiral, the rise in costs causing a rise in prices, the rise in prices a further rise in prices, the rise in prices a further rise in costs, the economist is as bewildered as his predecessor was in the face of depression and unemployment. Economists in the 1930's went on hammering away at the idea of cost reductions to cure unemployment, until Keynes showed them that the whole question could be quite simply solved by adjusting demand; now they go on hammering away at Bank Rate and other devices for reducing demand in an unsuccessful attempt to check rising prices, not realising that the real cure may lie in quite another direction, in reduced taxation and free trade.

There is, it is true, a minority school among economists now who do take some interest in costs, and the process by which rises in costs are passed on in prices. But this school also tends to hold that everything which the business man does is good and right, and that everything which he says must be accepted without question, even when the account which he gives of the way in which prices are decided is not consistent with itself. Now, the dearest wish of many business men is either to control a large-scale organisation which can completely dominate the market, or at any rate to participate in some agreement for fixing prices, apportioning markets, and restricting competition, which latter word is nearly always formally prefaced, in business discussions, by the adjective "cut-throat." Such arrangements are now regarded with positive approbation by some economists, and from others do not at any rate receive any serious condemnation. Any part which they may have played in raising prices, in insuring that all increases in costs are passed on to the buyer, is ignored.

To pass a Monopolies Act to meet this situation is really little more than a pious hope. With the amount of work there is to do in Britain, the Monopolies Commission at their

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present rate of progress will take several centuries to get round all the monopolies and price-fixing agreements, and by that time plenty more will have been formed. But there is one prospect which really frightens monopolies, cartels, and organisers of price-fixing agreements. That is competition from other countries.

A recently-published study has shown that Canadian manufacture produces far more per man-hour than does British, in every branch of industry. Let us dwell upon this: for it cannot be explained, as American productivity is often explained, by the larger scale on which American industry works. In every industry (except petroleum refining) the Canadian manufacturer is working for a much *smaller* market than the British. Still less can we rely on the explanation so often cited (which appears to have had its origin among electrical engineers anxious to sell more of their wares) that productivity depends upon horse-power. The horse-power per unit of product used by the Canadian manufacturer is considerably *less* than the British, and it does not appear that the value of his capital per unit of product is higher than ours. In other words, the British manufacturer's way of doing things is wasteful of power, fuel, and capital, too, as well as of labour, when compared with the Canadian.

The Canadian manufacturer's greater efficiency must be explained almost entirely in terms of the far fiercer competition to which he is subjected, alike when he sells his products, and when he buys his labour. Canada forbids price-fixing associations and retail price maintenance. For most commodities, tariffs are comparatively low. At any rate Canada succeeds in conveying to its manufacturers the expectation that any tariffs which they now enjoy may shortly be reduced or abolished, whereas British politicians have succeeded in giving their manufacturers the opposite impression. Finally, and probably the most important reason of all, the Canadian manufacturer is up against severe competition for his labour. He knows that unless he offers (differences in prices being taken into account) really good comparable wages, Canadian labour will just go across the border (which it is legally free to do) and get work in the United States.

WHEN we examine these basic questions of economics, we eventually come down to an important issue in political theory, namely the place of the manufacturer in society. Originally (as his name indicates) a humble household serf, engaged in making by hand some useful articles for the manor, the manufacturer's freedom and status gradually rose. But he was still subjected to close regulation and strict discipline, first by municipal guilds, later by royal officials. By the 18th century in Britain and America, by the 19th century elsewhere, these restraints had gone, and the manufacturer was left free, with very few qualifications, to buy what he liked, to sell where he could, to engage labour on his own terms, to organise his business as he thought best. But in return for all these freedoms there was an implied bargain with the rest of society—perhaps it is not accurate to use the word "implied," because many 19th-century writers indeed did their best to state it explicitly. The other side of the bargain was that the manufacturer should be subjected to the workings of competition, whether the competition of his fellow-countrymen, or of producers in other countries. Also, while the manufacturer was free to engage labour on any terms which he could negotiate, his labour was equally free to leave him if it saw a job which it preferred, or to emigrate to other countries—the right of *laissez-passer* was necessarily and logically linked to *laissez-faire*. There was a further implied understanding on the whole observed in the 19th century, that the business man should not try to dominate politics and society, and that, in spite of his new-found powers and importance, he should still recognise his place as a very useful part, but still only a part, of society.

However, from Bonar Law's accession to the leadership of the Conservative Party in 1911, to Neville Chamberlain's retirement in 1940, Britain went through a generation in

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which the political life of the country was largely controlled by business men, with three of them as Prime Ministers—Bonar Law, Baldwin, and Chamberlain. They had some admirable qualities—but most people do not wish for a repetition of their régime. They could not see things clearly enough. "Those who look but little into futurity have the quickest sensation of the present... the merchant is therefore rarely to be consulted about war or peace, or any designs of wide extent and distant consequence," as Dr. Johnson warned his fellow-Tories. The Americans, on the other hand, for all their claim to be a business community, generally seem, when it comes to the point, to choose either lawyers or soldiers for their highest political offices. (Lawyers and soldiers, it has been said, are among the few who have had real experience of dealing with the criminal classes.)

In the middle of the 19th century, Free Trade triumphed—even the United States was practically Free Trade from 1846 to 1861. The business man of those days, though aggressively Philistine, nevertheless seemed to recognise the need for both internal and international competition, and also did not regard himself and his kind as the right men to govern the country. In the later 19th century there came a movement, which in this case began in Europe and America and spread later to Britain, whereby conservative and nationalist politicians allied themselves with business men with the object of demanding tariffs against foreign goods. Much of this was a crude political manœuvre to exploit that simple dislike of foreigners which generally prevails among the uneducated (in which category many manufacturers must be included). But at any rate most protectionist politicians and manufacturers of those days still sincerely expected keen competition to continue within the boundaries of their own country.

When American Republicans, after a generation of protection, found that this state of affairs was beginning to change, and that manufacturers, behind the shelter of the tariff, were forming trusts and cartels with the object of restraining competition among themselves, they responded with a drastic measure, which has been a turning point in the economic history of the world. It is not generally realised that the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890 was introduced by a Republican Administration, indeed rather a weak administration whose President had been elected on a minority vote. Also it is not generally realised outside the United States that this Act, and its companion Act establishing the Federal Trade Commission in 1914, are strictly enforced. Every year thousands of minor monopolies, price agreements, and measures in restraint of competition are legally crushed, quite apart from the few major cases which reach the newspapers. In the United States, the necessity of forcing business men by law to compete, when if left to themselves they would much rather organise price-fixing associations, is now recognised without question by both political parties. The only organised contrary opinion comes from a few Harvard professors and their students, who cast longing eyes on the oligarchic organisation of business which prevails in Britain.

BRITISH experience has been quite different. From the 1880's onwards, an increasing number of manufacturers began to support the Conservative Party with the avowed object of securing tariffs, and with no intention whatsoever of having anything like a Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Their object was to organise cartels under the protection of a tariff, as they had seen their German counterparts doing. What stopped them was a well-informed electorate which understood the advantages of Free Trade. This was the major factor in the Conservative débâcle of 1906, and also of their surprise defeat when they again tried to raise the question in 1923.

In those days not only the Liberal Party but also the Labour Party believed in Free Trade. No purpose is served by pointing out the glaring inconsistency on the Labour Party's part, between believing in nationalising industries and at the same time in the freest possible competition of imported goods —after all, they were Englishmen, not greatly

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concerned with logical consistency. Most of the Labour leaders in the constituencies in those days were men who shared a great deal of the old outlook of Liberalism, including not only its belief in Free Trade, but also its non-conformism and teetotalism.

Britain became protectionist at the election of 1931, as a result of some very sordid manœuvres by the Conservative Party; but what was really the key factor in the transformation was the loss of belief in Free Trade by the leaders of both the Liberal and Labour Parties, and their morbid willingness to be alarmed by a rather bogus financial crisis, to the point of seeking seats in a Cabinet whose avowed object was to establish protection. After 1931, the thinking on this subject of the Labour Party, as well as of its leaders, began to change. It had lost most of its old shrewd, honest leaders of the Arthur Henderson type, and its thinking on economics came to be dominated by Cripps, who, while a man of great and undoubted merit, nevertheless firmly believed in regulating everything. Under his leadership, the Labour Party was quite ready to come to terms with the Conservatives and to declare itself protectionist—though even Cripps would probably have been shocked at the present-day excesses of protectionism in the Labour Party, trying to deny Indian cotton spinners their meagre livelihood if the sale of their products in any way interferes with Lancashire. The Liberal Party, or what was left of it, also changed its ideas on this subject—at any rate an important group in the Party did so: Lord Beveridge once explained to me that he regarded Free Trade as an essentially anti-Liberal idea.

So, during the 1930's, British manufacturers were protected, and their efficiency began to suffer; it certainly did not continue to improve as rapidly as it had been doing in the 1920's. But fundamental changes in economic policy, including changes for the worse, work themselves out slowly. The time was to come, in the 1940's, when the Conservative Party in their turn were to make a concession, deciding to accept one of Labour's principal ideas, in return for Labour acceptance of Conservative protectionism. This was the idea of excessive taxation.

In the Labour Party during the past decade, there have only been a few, apart from the completely uninformed, who, whatever they may have been saying, have really continued to *believe* that nationalisation would do any good, or who have really wanted to nationalise any more industries. But you cannot displace what was once the central object of a political party without allowing something else to take its place. In the Labour Party this has become a belief in taxation for its own sake, not a belief in taxation within proper limits, which is a desirable and necessary thing, but in taxation carried to excess. With such an object, politicians can harness those powerful motives of envy and hate which are never far from the surface in politics, whether it be hate of foreigners and Irishmen on the part of the old-fashioned Conservative, hate of the Church of England on the part of traditional Liberals, envy and hate of their own successful fellow-countrymen on the part of many Labour supporters.

In 1940, under an extreme military emergency, and in face of the need to call upon people to undergo every kind of hardship and sacrifice to meet the requirements of war, a good case could be made out for making the most drastic demands upon all owners of income and property too. Even under the circumstances of 1940, however, the taxation measures then introduced, involving practically a 100 per cent tax on some incomes, were excessive. Professor Hicks wrote at the time in his *Taxation of War Wealth* that even under the extreme circumstances of war, it was still advisable to allow a successful business man, when he had earned an additional £3, to keep £1 of it. The excessively high marginal taxation during the war years led in fact to outrageous extravagance and waste, which the country could ill afford.

During the period 1945–51 the Conservative Opposition criticised the Labour Government on a number of things, and some of their criticisms were very wide of the mark. But on the perpetuation of excessive taxation,

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the real evil of that period, they had practically nothing to say; and when they themselves succeeded to power it was clear that they had no objection to it at all. Apparently nobody reads any history nowadays, apart from professional historians trying to keep pace with each other's writings. The story of great empires and civilisations of the past slowly bleeding to death through taxation and bureaucracy apparently has no interest for any politician or civil servant to-day.

So the economists find themselves confronted with a world of Butskellite politics, wherein both parties think alike in wanting to keep competition at a minimum and taxation at a maximum. In the business man's bargain with the rest of society, he is now finally contracting out of his fundamental natural obligation to organise his business competitively. But in return for this privilege, he is having to pay taxes which leave him little hope of improving his business, or indeed for its ultimate maintenance. If his is an already well-established business, however, he finds one consoling feature in the situation: the taxes, which are hard on him, are positively killing to potential new competitors.

AGAINST this universal Butskellism among the politicians, the economist responds with what can only be described as a "civil service outlook." If this is the sort of thing that people want, well then let them have it, he seems to say, and he will confine himself to suggestions for few minor administrative improvements, or else (as most economists seem to find preferable) devote all his time to purposeless theoretical studies.

Such an attitude is indeed proper on the part of a member of the Administrative Civil Service, who may be called upon, in succeeding years, to serve Ministers and Governments of very differing outlooks. But for the university economists, and the financial writers, who enjoy a considerable measure of freedom, what a shameful surrender of responsibility! What an unhappy contrast to the Victorian economists, who, for all their faults, nevertheless knew that it was their duty to speak up clearly and to protest if they saw anything being done which would impoverish their country.

Behind this mean political outlook lies an intellectual disease which, like so many bad things in the modern world, appears to have reached the economists from the philosophers, and particularly from the Oxford philosophers. Economics, they say, is just a description of "how things happen," or of how to bring about certain objects which someone (not being an economist) desires to have brought about. But any statement by an economist about ends is forbidden, because that constitutes a "value judgment." In keeping with the diseased philosophy of the time, any "value judgment" is held to be a mere personal preference, not susceptible of rational analysis, comparable with the choice between different brands of toothpaste. Young economists seeking to be intellectually fashionable (much of what passes for serious writing in our universities in fact consists of little more than an attempt to pursue academic *chic*) devote themselves either to extremely recondite theoretical work, little of which will even be of any value, or, in the field of applied economics, pointlessly detailed and time-wasting analyses called "input-output tables" (very fashionable now), accounts of who sold what to whom, not realising that they are dealing with situations which change so rapidly that their tables, by the time they are completed, have ceased to be applicable.

These silly ideas were in fact refuted some years before they began to circulate by the great American economist, Allyn Young. (Young died in 1929 and I had the privilege of being his research assistant during the last months of his life, while he was Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics). He stated the issue quite firmly (*Economica*, March 1928). "There is and can be no such thing as an economics embodying only pure analysis and description," he wrote. Economics must have a perfectly definite end, "the material welfare of mankind."

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David Wright

A Fox Without a Tail

I A M unable not to admire the reaction of the fox in Aesop who lost his brush to a steel trap. Instead of abdicating to the misfortune he called a meeting to expound the advantages of living without an appendage. He lost his case with the other foxes, apparently; they refused to dispense with theirs. But from the story I don't draw Aesop's moral: as I see it, the maimed fox was not discomfited. He had won his point. For he did not want his friends to cut their tails off, he wanted to annul their commiseration. Henceforth they could not look on him from the altitudes of pity. To pity is to assume superiority just as to permit pity is to concede inferiority: that is why to pity is to insult.

By interpreting Aesop in this way I already bare the axe I have to grind—but, as the tale of the fox also teaches, better grind an axe than expose a stump. However, what I am after is less of philosophy of disability or of the attitudes it evokes than a subjective examination of the nature and effects of deafness. It is more unusual to be a poet than to be deaf; and while it is not for me to lay claim to one of these accolades, it seems indisputable I have been accorded the other. Yet even this combination, if it does occur in my person, is not unique; it was the condition of both Pierre de Ronsard and Joachim du Bellay. But it is also true that while deafness has been written about by doctors and teachers of the deaf, so far as I know the peculiar angle of experience afforded by the nature of this infirmity has not yet been discussed by anybody with both a first-hand and a life-long acquaintance with it. This I hope to attempt but it should be remembered that what follows is drawn from individual experience and should not be taken as necessarily of general application, for deafness affects differently according to the degree of its severity; and in addition the response of one born deaf is naturally of another kind to that of a person who loses hearing in youth or middle age.

There are degrees of deafness: in my own case, since the aural nerve is dead, it is total and beyond the alleviation or exasperation of hearing instruments. But there is no such thing as absolute silence, even in this category. Sound is vibration and some sounds are always to be heard, or more properly felt, through the bones and tissues of the body whenever it is in contact with anything that conducts vibration—footsteps on a wooden floor are an instance. (At an establishment for the secondary education of the deaf where I was taught, pupils were usually summoned to attention by the stamp of a heel—an infuriating expedient.) Other noises seldom inaudible include gunfire; the detonation of high-explosives; the din produced by drums and stringed instruments such as the harp and piano, but not sounds emitted by wind-instruments like the flute and bagpipes; the barking of particularly raucous dogs; the human voice, if the fingers touch the throat of someone speaking. Add to this list motor-bicycles, heavy lorries, carts clattering over cobblestones, cinema organs, and pneumatic drills, and it will be appreciated that even a totally occluded ear does not escape much of the normal orchestration of urban existence.

The world a deaf man inhabits is thus not absolutely silent, which is perhaps the chief

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complaint he has to make about it. But there is another sense in which his habitation fails to be noiseless and that is visually. Silence is not the absence of sound merely, but of movement too. On a calm day the stirring of a branch, and if it is in leaf the concatenated exclamation of its foliage, will break the illusory soundlessness and interrupt it pleasantly, as perhaps the true noise of the event does for a hearing ear. I do not remark on this to subscribe to the theory that the loss of one sense is compensated by an increase of acuity in the others. It is more a case of substitution. A man does not hear so he sees instead, and what he sees is sound. He can be deafened by much movement. The difference, of course, is that the "sound" he sees may not necessarily be an equivalent of the one really audible—the flight and movement of a bird, for instance, may bear no more relation to its call and its singing than the nonchalant melancholy of a seagull flying approximates the noise it utters.

THAT the loss of one sense is compensated for by a quickening of the others is a mistaken theory, in my own experience. Were it a true one, then after thirty years of deafness I ought to be exceptionally observant: but I am not, though sometimes appearing so. What has happened is, I do not notice more but notice differently. I observe objects and people, as such, in the vague and general way common to most persons. Hence I could give no more than the feeblest description of the streets I have lived in for fifteen years, while my memory for faces is plebeian. What I do notice, and notice acutely because I have to, because for me it makes up almost the whole of the data necessary for the interpretation and diagnosis of event, is movement where objects are concerned; and in the case of animals and human beings, stance, expression, walk, and gesture. For example, as somebody waiting impatiently for a friend to finish a telephone conversation with another knows when it is about to end by the words said and the intonation of the voice, so does a deaf man—like a person queuing outside a glass-panelled call-box—judge the moment when the good-byes are being said or the intention formed to replace the receiver. He notices a shift of the hand cradling the instrument, a change of stance, the head drawing a fraction of a millimetre from the earphone, a slight shuffling of the feet, and that alteration of expression which coincides with a decision taken. But more than this: the deaf man, if he knows his friend intimately, can even make a pretty accurate guess at the identity of the invisible correspondent at the other end of the line, not only from the expression or the tempo of animation of his friend's countenance but also by the posture of his body (relaxed or tensed, braced or easy) and what the hands are doing. For people tend to turn different facets of their personalities to their various acquaintances, and this orientation of personality is expressed not only by the adoption of a slightly altered tone of voice and style of conversation but also by infinitesimal adjustments of the lineaments and carriage not generally observed by most people, since they are naturally attending to other sources for parallel evidence, but which are noted by a deaf person because they are the only signals he can receive and interpret. Since few, apart from professional actors, realise just how much stance and carriage of the body reveal of mood and emotion even when the expression on the face is assumed or disguised, it can happen that by the paradox of his disability the deaf man is often in the position of an eavesdropper listening to what he is not intended to hear.

In all this there is nothing particularly extraordinary, it is simply the attainment of the same objective by a different and more roundabout process, like the extraction of the cork from a bottle with a knife when the proper tool is not available. A man without a corkscrew soon becomes handy at using a substitute. The deaf person has not got a keener eye but has had to cultivate a special attention to ascertain the answers to questions posed by inaudible phenomena. Outside the range of his necessary curiosity he is likely to be as unobservant as anybody else and as hard

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put to it as the next man to notice whether or not his wife is wearing a new hat.

But these remarks and some which follow should be understood to refer to those who became deaf from birth or who, like myself, became deaf in childhood, not to people unlucky enough to have lost their hearing at middle age or in early manhood, when the body is less agile to improvise new expedients in reaction to a modification of the senses. So far as that goes, I believe, mine has now so accommodated itself (as a hermit-crab to its shell) to silence that were the faculty of hearing restored this instant it would appear an affliction. I do not mean that I find deafness desirable but that in the course of time the disability has been assimilated to the extent that it is now an integral condition of existence, like the use of a hand, so that the sudden accession of the sense of hearing might mean to me as complete a *bouleversement* of a pattern and habit of living as the loss of that sense would for another.

I write, therefore, as one attuned to not protesting against the disability; and I postulate that what is interesting about it is not the nature of the condition but the point of view obtaining from a state of silence. Like an eccentrically-sited camera taking angle-shots which sometimes distort but often reveal otherwise masked lineaments of truth, the deaf man watches from the unexpected and unguarded quarter. It is to this aspect of deafness rather than its miseries and consolations (which are not very different from the miseries and consolations of other infirmities) that I am attending.

Take for example a major hurdle of the deaf, the difficulty of conversing. Many like myself can get by to some extent in ordinary life by the ability to read the movement of lips. Concerning this craft or skill it is necessary to make one or two points. It is not simply a physical operation in which the eye has learnt to interpret for the ear. It is an exercise in intellectual agility, for lip-reading is ninety per cent. guesswork. Most vowels are easy to distinguish but many consonants are produced by nearly identical lip movements which means that in effect a great number of words and syllables that are distinct in sound appear to the eye as like as peas. Here is an example of half a dozen words sharing the same vowel, which visually are practically indistinguishable one from the other: *mat*, *mad*, *bat*, *bad*, *pat*, and *pad*. In such cases the lip-reader guesses at the word from the syntax and context of the phrase or sentence in which it occurs, or sometimes from the general subject of the conversation. Sometimes the alternatives can be so many that it may take a lip-reader, running through the various possibilities in his mind (probably while his eye is engaged in taking in the next sentence) a quarter of a minute to make the choice. In addition there are words which for one reason and another are less easy to "read" than others. What happens, then, is that in practice lip-reading becomes a joint operation shared by both lip-reader and the person speaking. For the speaker takes part in the work of rendering his communication intelligible, not merely by taking pains with enunciation but in exercising a deliberate and selective choice of diction, avoiding, for instance, words he guesses or knows from experience to be ambiguous or difficult for the other to interpret. This labour of communication exerts an influence on the *kind* of conversation offered to a lip-reader. His friends naturally get into the habit of expressing themselves with greater directness and concision than usual and to come to the nub of what they have to say with less waffling around the point. So it comes about that the deaf—or so it seems from my experience—are asked to submit to less meaningless chat for the sake of chat than most people. Conversation with them tends to be stripped to essentials and remains more a vehicle of entertainment and exchange of ideas than it sometimes is with many, when like the gramophone and radio it is not really listened to but employed as a device to caulk the interstices of silence.

I am not myself a particularly good lip-reader—or it may be that from the lip-reading point of view I find myself at the

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receiving end of somewhat difficult conversations by virtue or vice of the company I keep. The easiest kind of talk to follow—if the least rewarding—is the tattle-tea-party sort; because, built up as it is like a meccano toy out of standardised interchangeable sections or clichés, it is only necessary to "read" a word or two to guess the rest of a sentence. (On the other hand the toughest lip-reading assignment is to try to follow a quotation from an unfamiliar poem, since in poetry the cliché expression is avoided and the words have the quality of being both right and intellectually surprising, so the dice are loaded against guesswork.) At any rate, of the strangers I meet, I find about half mostly unintelligible, either because they don't enunciate, or have a distorting accent, or talk too fast, or simply—this is generally the reason—because people have individual idiosyncrasies in the way they shape words and it takes time to get the hang of them, and conversely because it takes people time and practice to pick up the trick of speaking legibly. Where familiar friends are concerned the picture is of course different, and indeed I find it easy to follow their talk even when they are speaking fast. This occasionally leads to an odd kind of social embarrassment at parties or in pub conversations when a stranger joins in. For such are the operations of the human ego that if what is said by the stranger is not understood with equal facility—for though he may realise one's deafness, he is seldom aware of the factors contributing to the difference between lip-reading a familiar acquaintance and somebody new—he often feels affronted, for the good reason that nothing is less pardonable to the vanity than that a fellow creature should appear to refuse your own communications while seemingly preferring to accept another's.

Yet lip-reading is not simply a question of interpreting movements of the mouth alone. The intonation of the voice must be "read" as well. Someone, for example, says "You bastard": this conveys nothing unless the accompanying emotive qualification is communicated or obtained. What is meant by the words may be admiration, disapproval, gratitude, or chagrin, depending entirely on the tone the speaker uses. The easiest visible clue to the emotion qualifying the spoken word is the expression in the eyes. So in lip-reading one actually focuses one's attention on a speaker's eyes instead of his mouth, reading below the line as it were, the verbal enunciation of his mood. Communication is not merely a matter of words but is the sum of what is being felt as well as said: so much so that I find myself completely unable to lip-read anyone whose eyes I cannot see—somebody wearing very black sunglasses, for example. The divining of people's moods and intentions from their eyes is so much easier (since it makes less intellectual demand) than the reading of their actual words, that it is possible—in fact I do it frequently when tired or bored—to sustain a conversation without really knowing what is being said. A few non-committal interjections graded in tone to match the temper of the other's expression are all that one needs to interpose in order to assist the illusion that one is really following. If it is a funny story that is being told the task is even easier, for the mounting tempo, the crinkle of risible muscles as the climax of the joke approaches, are easily-read warnings to be on hand to laugh at the pay-off. The greatest danger is being asked a direct question bearing on the subject under discussion when one has no idea what it may be: the gambit then is to reply, "Well——" with a long pause; pause long enough, and nine to ten the other will be only too happy to start answering himself.

For the truth is that people want to communicate more than they desire communication, just as there are more who like to write poetry than are eager to read it. (I gather that the ratio of would-be contributors to buyers of the annual PEN anthology is somewhere in the region of five to one.) Thus, though it may seem half a boast to assert the paradox, as concerns hearing people, the deaf man—so far from being liable to be left out—is often in a strong position psychologically, like a mountain surrounded by Mahomets. I refer to those who have dominated (not

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merely "accepted") the disability. Every disability propounds the same alternative: either it dominates you or you dominate it. This truism is demonstrated every day, and not necessarily on the heroic scale of people like Wing-Commander Bader or Miss Helen Keller. But what is often forgotten is the corollary, that once a disability has been dominated it ceases, truly, to be a disability at all but becomes an asset, a weapon, like the blind eye of Nelson at Copenhagen.

Deafness is of course very much a nuisance and it is very tiring to have to lip-read and be continually on the *qui vive*. But apart from such irritations the life is very little different from other people's, full of worry and passion, pleasure and boredom, all of it one's own fault or contriving. It only annoys to have a special quality, "courage," attributed (as it often is by people who like to patronise) to the fact one has become adapted to the conditions of a peculiar existence, as if everyone did not have to have courage in order to be alive at all. There is a story about Sigmund Freud that bears on this. Somebody was telling him of the fate that had befallen one of his old friends, a Swedish professor I think it was. This professor was in the middle of writing a book when he had a stroke which left him paralysed, able only to move his eyes. However he went on with his work, dictating the book to a secretary by a device. He spelt out each word by directing his eyes from one letter to another of an alphabet painted on the wall opposite his bed. "Don't you think that was a supreme example of courage?" the man who told this story asked Freud. "Of course I don't," said the psychologist, "what else could he have done?"

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Michael Stone

An Old Hebrew Poet's Musings

for Anthony Conran

Was it the serpent taught the Incas how
To knot their words in tapestries of gold?
Theirs is a riddle that no sword can solve.
Lovers might know it when entwined they lie,
For there are answers which no book has told
To questions which one dare not ask oneself;

Or else a poet, beading words that weigh
No more than down from doves,—if he should hold
That filigree of song the Inca wrought
With praising hands,—might not the goddess sway
His understanding and thaw out the cold
From words once muscled in a lovers' knot?

My art, as old, hails from a different strand.
The tides have taught me that it is not vain
To write in sand, and that the wind cannot
Disperse the harvest which the heart has found:
For, look! the tides have made the sea their pen
To write a hymn upon the ocean's bed.

I sang at Hebron to a golden lyre!
And stood, poised like a reaper, on the shore
Of Lake Kinereth, spinning my silver coins
Upon its waves to watch their dance of fire,
And watched them dance until they danced no more,
But joined the fishes and the coralled bones.

Go to Tiberias, go to Galilee,
And drain the ancient lake. There you will find
Treasures of hope a Hebrew poet saved
For his old age, a suspect currency
In our days. And still, though black and stained,
Those coins bear witness how I sang and loved.

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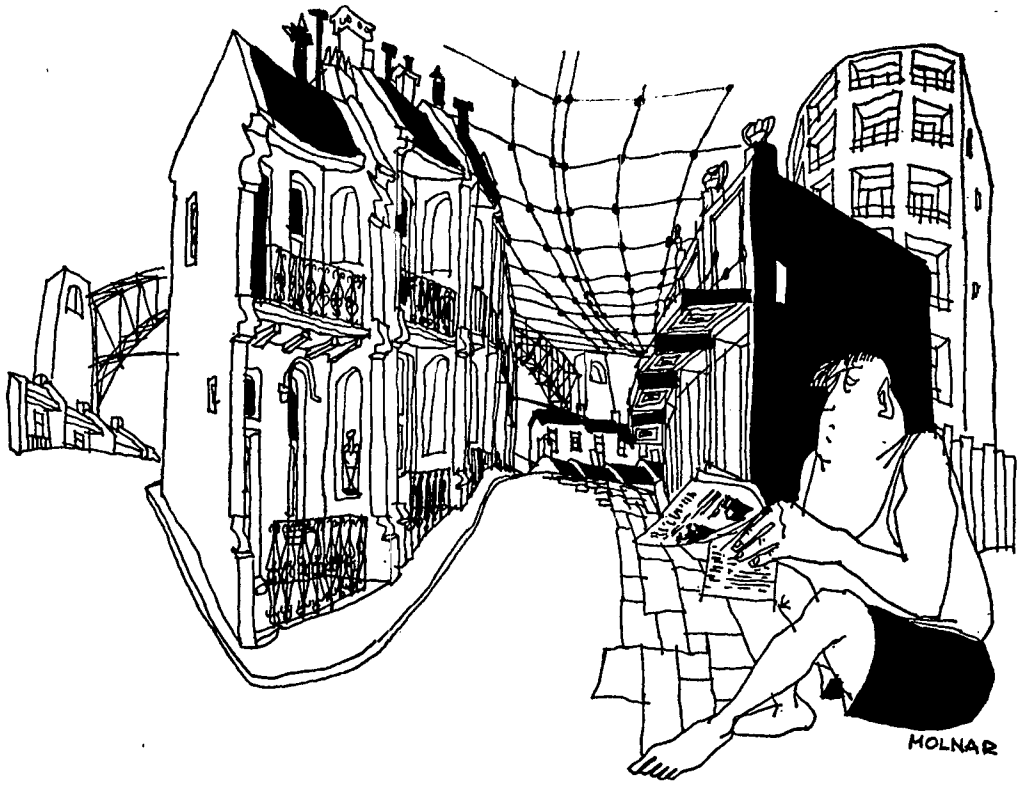

The World's Cities: Sydney

John Douglas Pringle

SYDNEY is ruled by three winds which command the city in turn like the chiefs of an invading army. The first is the north-easter, the prevailing wind of summer. It is a fair-weather wind, a lazy, languorous wind, which comes in from the long reaches of the South Pacific heavy with moisture and sticky with salt. This is the wind which drives the great Pacific rollers on to the open beaches before leaping over the narrow barrier of land, making the pines at Manly sing as it passes, and ruffling the calmer waters of the Harbour on the other side. On Sundays the crews of the 18-foot yachts catch it as they round the buoy for the long run home, and push out their bellying spinnakers which lift the small hulls out of the water until they seem to be flying.

The north-easter is a sea-breeze and is out of its element on dry land. As soon as it reaches the brick and concrete towers of the city it begins to flag, though it still has the strength to rustle the skirts of the palm trees on Macquarie Street and to fan the foreheads of the drinkers squatting on their haunches outside the pubs in Balmain and Woolloomooloo. A few miles inland it fades away altogether, daunted by the size of the continent before it. To the western suburbs it brings no relief from the heat, but to the more favoured eastern suburbs it is a source of pride and joy; and the wealthy citizens of

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Bellevue Hill and Point Piper set their houses to catch it like the yachts on the harbour set their sails. But the north-easter is not an unmixed blessing. If it brings coolness, it also brings the humidity which is the curse of Sydney's summer.

The north-easter has a rhythm of its own. It starts gently in the morning, the merest seabreeze, and grows stronger all day until by six o'clock in the evening it is blowing half a gale and sending the more timorous yachtsmen in for shelter. Then it dies away as the sun goes down. Sometimes, too, it seems to grow stronger each day while the temperature climbs steadily and Sydney swelters in sticky heat. Then suddenly it drops and there is a great calm. In the city the heat seems unbearable. Women sit outside their terraced houses in the inner suburbs and lean over their cast-iron balconies, unwilling to go indoors. Pale-faced children play languidly in the streets. But the men look to where great clouds are building up in the south or turn on the wireless to listen for the weather-forecast. They know that the time has come for the north-easter to give way to the second of the three winds—the southerly.

The southerly comes with a rush of cold air and a splatter of rain. The Sydneysiders call it the "southerly buster" because it arrives with a banging of doors and windows like a train coming into the station. It can be fierce for a few hours, bowling over the yachts in the harbour like ninepins and dexterously removing loose tiles from the house-roofs; but it is a much-loved wind in summer, bringing down the temperature with a bump, cooling the sultry streets, and sending fretful babies to sleep. Generally it blows itself out in the night and Sydney wakes up in the morning to blue skies and brilliant sun as the north-easter resumes its sway over the city. In winter, however, it may blow for days, bringing cold Melbourne weather and a hint of snow to pampered Sydney.

The third wind is the westerly, a gusty, dusty wind blowing from the heart of the continent. It is an unpredictable wind, following no rhythm and obeying no laws, but it is always unpleasant. In winter dry and bitterly cold, in summer dry and hot as the blast from an oven door, it pounces on the city and worries it. It is an uncomfortable, penetrating wind, which gets through clothes and windows, forcing dust into the eyes and nose. Like the sirocco of the Mediterranean, its extreme dryness seems to irritate people, making the easy-going Sydneysiders nervous and bad-tempered. In winter it may blow for weeks on end but in summer, fortunately, it rarely lasts more than a day or two—fortunately because it is only when the westerly is blowing that Sydney gets truly hot. The temperature climbs into the 100's; the tar melts on the roads; and those who go down to the beaches for relief find that they cannot run bare-foot across the burning sand to the water. Worse still, it is the bush-fire wind. If you look up at the sky during a hot westerly you will see a curious reddish-orange haze on the horizon. This is the smoke of bush-fires burning beyond the city boundaries. On a bad day, when the city is ringed with fires, the sky is half obscured with smoke and the angry sun glares down on the city like a blood-shot eye.

I HAVE described these three winds which rule over Sydney not only because they set the rhythm of the city's life but because each one seems to represent the conflicting elements which shape Sydney's character. The north-easter is the Pacific wind, and while it blows it tries to make Sydney a South Pacific city. Under its warm and humid breath men slow down in their daily tasks and dream of the islands to the east. Work is hard; pleasure is easy. Young men and women go down to the beaches of coarse but golden sand, which stretch for miles to north and south of the city, and spend the long days of summer basking in the sun or swimming in the surf. City typists take their sandwiches to the Botanic Gardens at lunch-time where they lie on the grass above the blue waters of the Harbour before going back, a little late and a little sulkily, to their hot and dusty offices. And if the men who are working on the roads or digging drains in the streets pause rather more frequently to lean on their shovels and wipe the sweat from

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their brows, who can really blame them? The temperature is 85 and the humidity not less than 80 per cent. And who can blame them if, when work is done, they crowd into the pubs and swill down pints of the cold, strong beer which is their greatest pleasure?

The southerly, on the other hand, is the voice of conscience, the voice of home and England even though it comes from the Antartic. While it blows life resumes the brisker tempo of the northern hemisphere. A man can work hard without getting too tired or can sit indoors and read without longing to be out in the sun. It is a Puritan wind which scourges the city for its laziness.

But the westerly is the voice of Australia. This is the true aboriginal wind, hard and lean and dry as the bones of dead sheep. Like the continent itself, it seems hostile to the white man who has swarmed on the seaboard. It hurls itself down from the mountains of the Dividing Range as if it would blow the city into the sea or burn it down with its fierce bush-fires. It mocks the efforts of suburban gardeners, withering their dahlias and roses in a single morning and turning their trim lawns brown no matter how they try to assuage its thirst with hoses. It is a nagging reminder of the great dry continent which stretches away beyond the Blue Mountains so clearly outlined on the horizon.

Sydney, then, is a compromise, a mixture of these elements. It can never quite decide whether to be a thriving, bustling, Anglo-Saxon boom-town, a new Birmingham or Chicago, or a happy-go-lucky South Pacific city, an Australian Rio de Janeiro or Buenos Aires. And always the Australian continent is warring against both these alien conceptions, insisting on its rights and making the city hard and bare and violent like its own nature. It is an inconsistent city, where men in blue serge suits jostle against other men wearing nothing but a pair of shorts or a linen suit and a tropical shirt. It is a gay, pagan, boisterous, raffish city, full of oysters and beer and pretty girls in summer frocks and white sails on the Harbour, but full also of hard-faced business-men and angry policemen shouting at street corners and traffic jammed in narrow streets. There never seems room for its one and a half million people who crowd the pavements in a relentless torrent and drive their cars in thousands over the great steel bridge. Only at night, when the sun sets and the wind drops and the people go home to their sprawling suburbs, does this restless city allow the traveller to stroll about its streets and absorb its atmosphere and reflect on its strange history.

PHYSICALLY Sydney is a sketch for one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Neither Rio de Janeiro nor San Francisco nor Naples nor Istanbul can match the splendour of its site. The vast harbour, with its innumerable bays and coves and inlets surrounded by low wooded hills, is the dream of the town-planner. And the first tentative attempts to fill the plan with bricks and mortar did not lack dignity. Governor Macquarie, who took charge of the infant colony on 1st January, 1810, was a man of wide vision and sound taste. He had a clear conception of what a great city should be, based on his travels in many lands, and he and his wife both shared a characteristic 18th-century passion for building and landscape gardening. Moreover, he was fortunate enough to find an architect to match his plans in the convict Francis Greenway, who had won a local reputation in Regency Clifton before an unfortunate essay in forgery led to his deportation. Macquarie, a man of liberal instincts, welcomed Greenway and made use of his talent as far as the inevitable difficulties of the new colony and the parsimonious attitude of the British Government allowed. Before Macquarie left Australia in 1821, he had given Sydney the outline of a fine city, and Greenway had built half a dozen public buildings of modest but unquestionable beauty.

Alas! Macquarie's plans were not carried through and Greenway had few successors. Sydney grew steadily through the 19th century during which planning was unfashionable and architectural taste declined so disastrously throughout the Western world. Regency Sydney was soon swamped in a great

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rush of Victorian and Edwardian brick which turned the city into a sprawling, hugger-mugger of ugly buildings. To-day all that is left of Macquarie's dream are the straight lines of Pitt, Castlereagh, George, York, Clarence, Kent, and Sussex Streets—eloquent names!—and the battered elegance of Macquarie Street. If you walk down Macquarie Street to-day, you can still see Greenway's handsome barracks and the simple but graceful colonnades of the Mint and Parliament House which are all that is left of his original hospital. Further down are the battlemented stables he built for Government House, an absurd but charming essay in Regency Tudor rather in the style of Inveraray Castle. On the other side of the street, squeezed between big office buildings of uncompromising ugliness which house the surgeons and medical specialists of Sydney, a few old Regency houses with good windows and delicate Ionic columns in wood or iron remind one of a dream that failed.

But the Victorian age was not all loss. It produced one or two handsome public buildings and the rows of terraced houses in the inner suburbs which are Sydney's most charming and original contribution to architecture. These houses are all of two storeys, with one or two windows and a door on the ground floor and a balcony above, but the endless variety of the windows and the elaborate cast-iron lace work on the balconies give them a quaint distinction. They are, in fact, a kind of Victorian rococo in which the lines and proportions of the 18th century still linger. The best examples are now found in Darlinghurst and Paddington—Darlo and Paddo to the natives—working-class suburbs whose cheerful, slummy life contrasts oddly with their faded charm. Walking along these streets and seeing the women on the balconies or the shadows behind the curtains, it is easy to imagine sleazy dramas of vice and crime which enliven the Sunday papers. Most of them are tumble-down and ill-cared for, but a few have now been taken over by middle-class couples with Bohemian tastes, who paint them in gay colours and pick out the elaborate floral designs of the cast-iron balconies with blues and yellows.

THE worst architectural horrors came much later in the years before and after the First World War, when the rash of bungalows spread fast over the wooded hills around the harbour to house the growing population. These bungalows, built with liver-coloured bricks and staring red tiles, now form some of the ugliest suburbs in the world. Bondi and Dover Heights, Mosman and Manly, are crimes against nature hardly paralleled even in Britain. During the same period the centre of the city was burdened with massive office blocks built in an Edwardian style which was already out of date as well as ugly. Indeed hardly one good building was erected in Sydney during the first fifty years of the 20th century. The only achievement was the massive steel hump of the Harbour Bridge, a great buckle holding the two sides of the harbour together, which is undeniably impressive even though it can be criticised on aesthetic grounds. Its sheer size dominates the city and forms a focusing point in the superb expanse of the harbour itself.

In the last ten years the tide has turned again and good architecture is timidly making its way once more. In the outer suburbs men like Sydney Ancher and Balwinson and Seidler have built many good, clean villas in a contemporary style which goes admirably with the brilliant light and hard edges of the bush. In the city itself big business firms have begun to build tall new office blocks of steel and glass and aluminium which, if only doubtfully suitable to the climate, at least acknowledge the advances which have been made in other parts of the world. This revolution has started in Macquarie Street where Greenway began nearly 150 years ago. Already the glassy rectangles of the I.C.I. building and Unilever House reflect the dancing waters of the harbour and foreshadow a new Sydney of soaring skyscrapers and dazzling curtain walls.

One building, however, promises something still better. If Sydney ever builds the opera house designed by the Danish archi-

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tects Utzon and Andersson at Benelong Point on the harbour, it will have one of the most beautiful modern buildings in the world, a splendid pavilion whose soaring white roofs of cunningly interlocked shell-vaults will echo the sails of the yachts on the harbour. This is a design which mocks the functionalism of the office blocks with every swelling curve. Baroque in spirit yet intensely modern in its idiom, it should one day be the pride and wonder of Australia.

The dream of the past has failed; the dream of the future has yet to be fulfilled; yet Sydney to-day is not an ugly city. Not all the red roofs and liver-coloured bricks, the giant blocks of flats and squalid fibro bungalows, can altogether mar the matchless beauty of the site where every turn in the road and every dip in the hills reveals a new glimpse of the harbour or the sea, blue and dazzling in the distance. The suburbs, dreadful as they are, are saved by the violet-blue of the jacarandas, the brilliant scarlet of the flame trees, the gay colours of the flowering shrubs from all over the world which grow so easily in Sydney's semi-tropical climate.

THERE can be few big cities that are kinder to its citizens. A man can live in the outer suburbs among the gum-trees and flowers of the unspoilt bush or by a cove of the harbour or near the heart of the city, yet always be within a quarter of an hour of a beach that would be thought magnificent in Europe. Only twenty miles to the north the great inlets formed by the Hawkesbury and the Pittwater and the Cowan Water make a playground of sheltered water and wild bush that are a yachtsman's paradise. The white-bellied sea eagle still soars over the ocean beaches and the dark woods of the Pittwater. Crimson rosellas, one of the most beautiful of all the parrots, still swoop and scream in suburban gardens where the English blackbird challenges the Persian nightingale and the Australian thrush to a contest of singing. And if the sensitive heart grows weary of the too bright light and the ugly buildings and the raucous noise and ill-manners of boom-town, night brings peace and mystery and poetry as the sun goes down in a saffron glare behind the bridge and the lights twinkle on the shores of the harbour and the ferries move like fireflies over the dark waters.

Night is always beautiful in Australia and never more beautiful than in Sydney. The stars do not seem fixed in the distant heaven as in the northern hemisphere, but hanging from it on invisible wires, so close they are, great chandeliers of light swinging and glittering through the velvet sky. And everywhere the citizens of Sydney can look out of their windows in the dark like the poet Kenneth Slessor:

"At waves with diamond quills and combs of light
That arched their mackerel backs and smacked the sand
In the moon's drench, that straight enormous glaze,
And ships far off asleep, and harbour-buoys
Tossing their fireballs wearily each to each. . . ."

Night brings to Sydney a poetry that does not exist in the day when there is no perspective and no mystery, and the hideous red tiles on the house across the bay are as clear to the eye as the flowers in your own garden.

But most Sydneysiders, like the citizens of most cities, are not greatly concerned with poetry. When work is done they prefer to crowd into the bare, tiled bars where the barmaids, half-sister, half-harlot—how well Ray Lawler described them in "Summer of the 17th Doll"!—set out the schooners of strong, cold beer on the sopping counter. Boys and girls walk hand in hand down the narrow canyons of Pitt Street and Castlereagh Street, where the vertical signs of the neon advertisements look like Chinese writing, and stare into the tawdry lighted shop windows or sit in dingy milk-bars eating stale sandwiches and drinking horrid drinks. Others crowd into darting taxis to drive to a cinema (which they call a theatre) to see Ava Gardner, or go to the old Stadium at Rushcutter's Bay, built for the championship fight in which Jack Johnson avenged all the wrongs of the American negro on the unfortunate hide of

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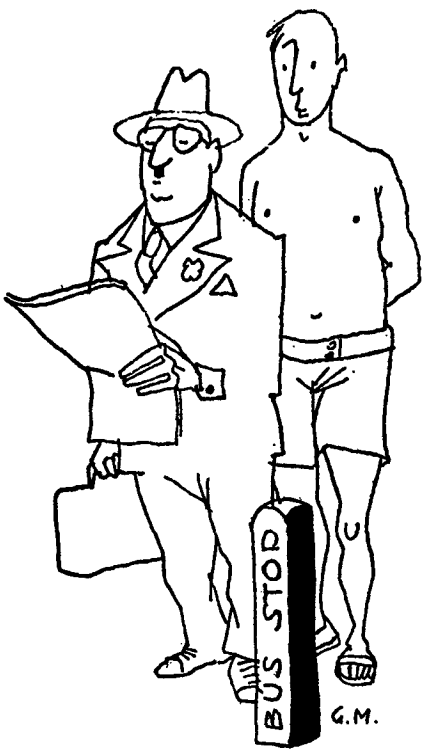
Tommy Burns. If they are in love, they take the ferry across the harbour to Manly where they can lie and kiss on the beach by the thunder of the Pacific surf.

In the working-class suburbs wives lead home their husbands, genially or belligerently drunk, from the pubs where they have stayed too long. Older men, whose wives have long ago died or left them or ceased to care, sober up on the steps of the pub or sleep it off in quiet corners. In the parks the more hopeless cases still, the hardened metho-drinkers and down-and-outs, wrap their newspapers round their legs and thank God they live in a warm



climate. For alcohol is still a potent curse in Sydney where men drink unashamedly for the pleasure of getting drunk.

There are, of course, more refined pleasures for those who want them. You can dine well in Sydney at half a dozen European restaurants at King's Cross or the city, though for some curious reason it is hard to find one where you can sit outside by the harbour. Perhaps the north-easter is too strong or the proprietors fear the sudden tropical storms which deluge the streets. The small but excellent oysters and the huge but excellent prawns make a good introduction to the inevitable steak, and the discriminating soon learn that the best red wines from the Hunter River and South Australia are as good as all but the very best in France. After dinner you can go to hear Nicolai Malko conduct the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in the Town Hall or go out to Newtown to see what the Elizabethan Theatre Trust has to show at its theatre. You can, if you want, go to a still more expensive restaurant to dine or dance or sweat out the night in a dingy night-club, but these pleasures are for the few. For the most part Sydney goes to bed early, drunk or sober, and on the solid North Shore Line the lights go out before ten.

AT THE week-end Sydney comes into its own. Little work is done on a Saturday morning, and the cars stream out to the races at Randwick, to the cricket or football and to the surfing beaches. Democracy still rules and there is little class distinction in these matters. The rich tend to go out to the northern beaches—Newport, Avalon, Whale Beach, and the lovely but ill-named Palm Beach, while the workers throng the yellow sands of Bondi, Coogee, and Maroubra; but you cannot tell a man's income in a pair of swimming trunks and the Pacific surf is a mighty leveller. Each beach has its life-saving association of bronzed young men who take it in turns to patrol the beach and watch out for sharks or swimmers in distress. If you are wise you stick to the space between the red flags which mark the safe part of the beach, for a big surf causes dangerous rips which can sweep a swimmer four hundred yards out to sea in a few minutes. If that happens the life-savers spring into action with wonderful speed and courage. Very few lives are lost, yet it is not unusual to read in the Sunday paper that fifty or sixty rescues were made the day before.

The sea and the surf seem to satisfy not only the sporting instincts of the Sydneysiders but their aesthetic instincts as well. They love the colour and pageantry

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of the life-savers who parade on the beach in brilliant coloured caps and costumes. They love to watch the young men riding in on the great breakers, either balancing easily on surf-boards or "shooting" the huge waves without a board by a knack which takes much time to learn and some courage to practise. They love the dazzling foam and thunder of the surf on the red-gold sand and the long summer days when the sun wheels slowly across the deep blue sky. The surf-boards and surf-skis, highly polished and painted in great diagonal stripes of colour, are often things of beauty and match the handsome boys and pretty girls who use them with such skill and daring.

That is the best of Sydney. And the worst? You meet it a little as you drive home from the beach in a tangled snarl of motor cars. Every nation reveals its character in the way it drives its cars, and the aggressive thrusting side of the Australian character rises to the surface as the drivers force their way through regardless of rules or common courtesy. You see it again in the dumps of rubbish which line the roads and the countless beer bottles flung casually into the bush or the creeks. You hear it at the races in the angry shouts of the crowd as the favourite fails and the jockey is jeered and hooted as he rides back to the paddock. You see it in the sight of drunks brawling on the footpath in William Street while men stand round laughing and urging the winner to "put the boot in." You see it at Prince's and Romano's where smart, hard-faced, wealthy women lunch together and try to attract the attention of the photographers and "social reporters" sent there by the newspapers. For this is a rough, boisterous, greedy city with little time for the grace of life and little respect for the shy and retiring. "Push" is a quality much admired. Parents push their children; children push themselves; and too often the young and strong and ambitious push the older and weaker out of the way.

It is not a city for minorities—either the minorities of race, religion, or intellect. The White Australia policy has barred all coloured peoples, but down in Campbell Street the furtive descendants of the brief Chinese immigration in the 1850's go about their lawful occupations of preparing Chinese meals for Australian diners. Out at Botany Bay, rapidly becoming a shabby, industrial area, some miserable half-caste aborigines huddle in shacks on the shore where their ancestors first stared in amazement at the sails of the First Fleet. The European immigrants thrive better and flourish mightily in some of the suburbs, but they still tend to cling together, and the Italians especially often feel themselves resented and despised. Only at King's Cross, a cheerful, middle-class Soho within a mile of the centre of the city, have the New Australians created an atmosphere which suits them. Living in tiny flats, surrounded by delicatessen shops and espresso coffee bars, they stroll the streets up to midnight in a brave but slightly pathetic attempt to convince themselves that they are still living in Europe and not 12,000 miles away on the other side of the globe.

The writers and artists go where they can. Many prefer to live outside Sydney, in minute colonies beside the Hawkesbury or Pittwater or even in the derelict mining village of Hill End in the mountains. Others live in King's Cross, aware of its essential falsity, but preferring that atmosphere to the aggressive Australianism of the suburbs where Sundays are devoted to the sacred rites of car-washing and gardening. Another minority lives out in the spacious grounds of the University to the west of the city, where ill-paid lecturers sit in dingy common rooms and look, half-enviously and half in horror, at the concrete towers and spires of the bustling city which blandly disregards their existence. Once there was a time when certain professors or a personality like the poet Brennan, who lectured in Latin and Greek, were recognised and respected in Sydney. Not now. To-day only Professor Messel's round pale face and black straggling beard would receive a glance of interest or recognition, and that because he has "sold" Sydney the possibilities of atomic physics with a blend of push and showmanship which Sydney can appreciate and understand.

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On Bellevue Hill another minority—the old ruling families, the Knox's and Stephens' —cling wistfully to their beautiful gardens and look with dismay at the new city which has engulfed them. Though they still have their places in the clubs and in the Members' Stand at Randwick, they are continually trying to adjust themselves to a social revolution which took place, alas, without their permission.

ONCE or twice a year Sydney is united and its striving stilled by certain public occasions. The most trivial of these is the day of the Melbourne Cup when the whole of Sydney stops work to listen to the broadcast of the race, and you can see the strange sight of streets empty and deserted in the middle of the afternoon save for small groups which huddle round a car where someone has a radio. The most solemn is Anzac Day on which Australia commemorates the landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli on 25th April, 1915. This is a public holiday throughout Australia and in Sydney it always begins with a Dawn Service at the War Memorial followed by a march of the "diggers"—the ex-soldiers of all the wars in which Australia took part. Anzac Day is Australia's only true national day and it calls forth deep emotions. It is a moving thing to see the diggers marching in their units through the streets lined with silent men, women, and children, many of whom have stayed up all night to secure good places. Yet when the march is over and the hotels are open, the day quickly degenerates into license, and by six o'clock at night half the diggers are staggering blind-drunk from pubs and regimental reunions—a drunkenness tolerated cheerfully by the police and the community.

The third great occasion is "the Show" which takes place in the early autumn and lasts nearly a fortnight. Originally an agricultural show for the farmers of New South Wales—the graziers hold a separate sheep show at another time—this has become an annual festival when town and country meet in a blaze of good-fellowship and enjoyment. Every Sydney family goes "to the Show" at least once a year, spending vast sums of money on samples for the children and in side-shows, and eagerly watching those stern Australian folk-heroes, the wood-choppers, flashing their gleaming axes in the sun. At night there are trotting-races and polo games and buck-jumping to amuse the huge crowd, while the country boys bed down in the straw beside the sleek bulls in their stalls. It is always a pleasant week in Sydney. Graziers, up for their annual holiday with their wives and children, stride down Martin Place wearing broad-brimmed hats and elastic-sided boots. City fathers and sons file through the long sheds at the show, staring with wistful admiration at the cattle. For once the invisible barriers between town and country are down, and Sydney takes its proper place as the capital of a great agricultural state.

This is the big, thriving, extrovert city which Sydneysiders themselves like to recognise. They are intensely proud of its size and wealth, its pretty girls and beautiful beaches, its wonderful harbour, which God provided, and its huge bridge, which was built by Dorman Long. They will shake their heads over its reputation for corruption, and admit its shortcomings—its deplorable public transport system and sordid pubs and lack of civic pride—but they feel that these are merely the inevitable pimples of adolescence. They are secretly proud of its toughness and exuberance. It is a city with a future and the past is better buried. Yet there is a past of sad and secret memories as well. No great city in the history of the world was born under so cruel a star. No sensitive man can forget the wretched convicts who were dumped on this barren shore on 26th January, 1788, or the thousands more who were transported during the next sixty years until the settlers rebelled against this inhuman policy. Not all the convicts were badly treated and many were quickly set free and flourished in the country which they had perforce "adopted," yet there was cruelty and callousness enough. To see the great dry-dock hacked out of the living rock of Cockatoo Island by hand, or the gloomy walls of the old gaol at Darlinghurst,

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or the grim outline of the little island in the harbour still called Pinchgut because rebellious convicts were sent there to repent on a diet of bread and water, is a chastening experience for an Englishman. No wonder that all attempts to make Australia Day, the day when Captain Phillip raised the British flag at Sydney Cove, a popular national holiday have failed. It is not only the "perfidy of publicans groaning to God from Darlinghurst." Deep in the secret heart of Sydney, beneath the brashness and the pride and the boasting, is a memory of human suffering and resentment against those who caused it.

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Theatre—Nothing but Theatre

The Plays of Ionesco

"Théâtre bourgeois ou petit-bourgeois? Non. Théâtre populaire? Non. Théâtre tout court."

GEORGES LERMINIER'S placing of a controversial dramatist is confirmed by the stealthy progress of Ionesco's plays in England. Put on at the Arts, the Royal Court, the Institut Français, and in the provinces, they have not yet achieved a foothold in the commercial theatre of the West End. Nor have they even been in favour with Theatre Workshop, whose output is cosmopolitan in the extreme. If you are inclined to write off Ionesco as a coterie playwright, there is, superficially, plenty of justification. He speaks respectfully of surrealism, works a macabre vein capable of being thought unhealthy, and generalises about his method with a chic evasiveness calculated to annoy critics of the Right and Left. Intransigently uncommitted, he throws them bones to gnaw, such as the tempting label "anti-theatre," while pursuing a course which may eventually be recognised as the most influential innovation since Chekhov.

"Listen," Chekhov would say, when consulted on a point of interpretation. "I am a doctor, and write plays in my spare time." Ionesco's evasiveness has the same *faux-naïf* quality, masking revolutionary intentions. The theatre is perhaps subject more than any other art to economic pressures, gossip, and the cult of personality. If you wish to impose original vision on it, the usual approach is to employ accepted forms as a springboard. That was the way of Shaw and Ibsen. John Osborne at present illustrates it, with Archie Rice making a direct and dynamic appeal across the orchestra pit at one moment and shrinking into a member of the naturalistic family group the next. Osborne's personal statement is not yet mature enough to make one indifferent to formal considerations during a performance: one is still aware of the mechanism, whereas with Chekhov—and at times Pirandello—it is absorbed by the vision. Ionesco achieved this with *The Chairs* (1952) only two years after his first play was put on.

The vision, statement, or whatever you care to call the total artistic impact of an important dramatist, can be left to take care of itself. All the new dramatist can hope for is a progressive acceptance of his vision by discerning playgoers and directors. In the interim, the critic can best help by analysing the mechanism, instead of straining after the premature assessments which held up the appreciation of Ibsen and Chekhov so long. There it was a case of critical resistance, only fully defined when the plays themselves had at last forced it aside and made their point. In time the obstruction was seen to have been caused by social pressures, xenophobia, arbitrary definitions of drama, and so on. It is already possible to recognise some of the resistances to Ionesco. As a slick "Parisian" he lacks the romantic and patrician element which gets Anouilh by in the West End with appropriate casting, and he repels the popular theatre movements everywhere by his frivolity of tone. According to Ionesco the achievement of Brecht is *"un théâtre de Boy Scout."* There is enough truth in the quip to render it unforgivable. Suspect on such grounds to both the conventional and the radical, Ionesco also offends academic intellectuals by the deliberately sustained banality of much of his dialogue.

IT IS necessary to take account of these resistances, because Ionesco's plays are quite easy to assimilate in performance. The trouble comes when playgoers, including critics, try to place them in relation to dramatic tradition by summarising the "plots," which seem tiresomely eccentric, or the language, relatively unimportant. A safer approach to Ionesco is to consider a more positive side of his art, such as the use of props. "It is not only allowed but positively advocated," he said, in a Third Programme talk, "to make stage properties play their part, to bring objects to life, to animate the décor and materialise symbols."

Props tend to be beneath the notice of serious writing on drama, largely because they cut little ice in the script and only take on major impor-

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tance at the performer's end of the business—consciously, that is. But props such as Odets' violin in *Golden Boy* and Montherlant's pagan statue in *Malatesta* come across just as powerfully as anything spoken. Ionesco's handling of them in, say, *Comment s'en débarrasser* ("How to Get Rid of It"), is startlingly original, for they carry the main burden of the action with a clarity and economy only to be appreciated, perhaps, by the stage manager and the actors.

"That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom next year?

On some such hint, Ionesco has built *Comment s'en débarrasser*, with the corpse in the leading rôle, though in theatrical jargon no more than a prop. When the play begins it is still out of sight, in the bedroom of a middle-class couple; it is growing steadily and mushrooms are appearing as a by-product. How it died is never decided, but there it is, an objective correlative of procrastination and guilt, worth far more dramatically, even before it invades the stage, than pages of dialogue. When its feet appear—or rather, its boots, bigger than the actors—the debt to surrealism is obvious and one remembers Cocteau's prescription for fantastic surprise: *"une locomotive qui entre par la porte."* The boots are relentlessly followed by enormous legs. But by that time we have got used to a stage picture which looks absurdly pretentious in a still photograph. In performance we accept the corpse, without bothering to ask how the boots came to grow with the feet, because assent to devices of this kind, though outside the scope of naturalistic drama, is of the essence of live theatre.

By the time the corpse has begun to advance its legs across the stage it has become domesticated with the audience as much as with the characters, and what might sound morbid in description is not in effect. Props ought, of course, to be the servants of the action and not draw too much attention to themselves, and Ionesco has not yet been given sufficient credit for assimilating this technical enormity into a play. He does so in two ways. First, by integrating the advance of the corpse with a corresponding retreat of more familiar objects—the furniture of the offstage room it has usurped: this piles up on the stage, a visual reminder of the emergency. Secondly, and more important, the reactions of the husband and wife are consistently interesting.

The wife nags the husband, blames him for their predicament, makes great play with the housework and "employment" at a telephone switchboard, but seems more concerned with what the neighbours will think than with the moral implications of what is happening; the husband's response to the inconceivable is to measure the advance of the corpse's legs, inch by inch. Although neither is capable of responding emotionally or intellectually to the intrusion on anything like the scale it demands, they endure it by alternating bouts of self-deluding optimism and futile activity, much as people behave in relation to the encroaching danger of nuclear warfare. Hemmed in by their furniture, they also make a point about the inadequacy of middle-class values. Committed writers have made it often enough, but through dialogue or situation which tend, even at times with Ibsen, to seem contrived and rhetorical when the initial impact is past. It would be wrong to underestimate Ionesco's contemporary relevance, merely because he chooses to make theatrical statements visually.

In *Comment s'en débarrasser*, dialogue quite unremarkable in itself takes dramatic life from the significant clutter on the stage. "We're not living in the Palace of Versailles," says the wife; and the husband, at another point, "These aren't the normal conditions for intellectual work." The effect of these lines depends on their visual context, and any attempt to assess them apart from it would be critically dishonest. It is an effect not to be estimated by reading the stage directions, which are, after all, and in spite of Shaw's notorious elaborations, addressed primarily to the stage director. Therefore the critics, committed from habit to conveying as much as they can of a play's verbal content, tend to make Ionesco sound wildly eccentric and difficult to understand, or else capricious and irresponsible, whereas audiences, under no obligation to categorise the plays or their responses to them afterwards, appear to enjoy them without much difficulty; so that an original dramatist is quietly building himself a public without the mediation of interpreters.

The defect, it seems to me, of *Comment s'en débarrasser*, is that Ionesco landed himself in the same difficulty as his characters. Having got most of the corpse on to the stage, precisely how to get rid of it defeats him. In the published version he provides alternative endings, both of them weak and pretentious, and in Jean-Marie Serreau's production, seen at the Institut Français last year, there is yet another in which Amédée's sentimental journey to the stars with the corpse is shown in moving pictures. All three come across as meretricious and chi-chi, masking a failure of invention; but Ionesco has said, "you cannot find a solution for the unendurable, and only the unendurable is truly theatrical."

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This typically Ionescan aphorism about the nature of drama is justified in so far as it defines his own achievement in *The Lesson* and *The Chairs*—as well as in *How to Get Rid of It*, which is the best introduction to his method, precisely because of its unsatisfactory ending. The complexity of the tension built up is only properly appreciated when it has been dissipated before your eyes and you become aware of the dialogue as separate and not up to par. Much of it clearly derives from Flaubertian sottise and the passages of comic pedantry in *Ulysses*. At its best, the language has a prim, repetitive formality, very clever indeed but dramatic only in the sense that Congreve's is; it even suggests, at times, a French version of Ivy Compton-Burnett. But the dialogue's relation to what is seen, its part in the total pattern of performance, are more important. In *How to Get Rid of It*, the dialogue is sometimes no more than a running commentary. In *The Lesson*, very much in the foreground, it has strong support from the contrast between the professor and the young girl. This simple stage effect is elaborated by having the old goat change gradually from obsequiousness to annoyance, his pupil from alertness to torpor. Ionesco describes the process in a long preliminary stage direction, which summarises the required evolution of both performances in terms of both appearance and diction. It makes the sort of script we are used to seem, in comparison, no more than a pretext for recitation and all too easily broadcast on sound.

WHEN we come to *The Chairs*, it is found that interplay of the heard and the seen, at any rate in terms of contrast between a big corpse and little people, a bearded pedant and a pretty girl, is no longer obvious. There are still dominant props, in fact they gave the play its title, but the visual fussiness they lead to now and then in *How to Get Rid of It* is gone altogether. The trappings of naturalistic and surrealistic décor, of heightened speech, and apparently all the accepted forms of major drama as well, have been discarded, and we are down to a sort of charade involving only the chairs and a couple of actors. This is to discount the orator who winds up the play, is modishly macabre and, like the ending of *How to Get Rid of It*, an arbitrary solution; it might have been better to have nothing come in when the great doors open. That, I think—and a fiction in *How to Get Rid of It* that the corpse became invisible as soon as it was out of the flat—would have been readily accepted.

But what Ionesco has achieved in *The Chairs* is remarkable. He succeeds in making audiences, accustomed for years to photographic realism or elaborate décor, fill the stage imaginatively with a crowd of people who are not on it: it is Ruth Draper's approach developed in a continuous action, and goes beyond a reassertion of visual effect to the roots of theatrical illusion. The economy of it is undeniable, with Stanislavsky's acting principle of "as if" the basis. The old woman, for instance, raises her hand and simpers as if the amorous colonel were kissing it. With such gestures and plausible answers to questions never spoken, not only costume, make-up, and the usual paraphernalia of naturalism, but even subsidiary actors can be dispensed with. You can keep as much naturalism as you need for speech or facial expression without getting bogged down in it.

You can depart from it, also for the sake of economy, as Ionesco does when he wishes to make the point that a wife's attitude to her husband can be partly maternal. Instead of expending the usual time and dialogue over this, he simply has the old man sit on his wife's knee and talk like a baby, "tout naturellement." It is asking a lot of audiences accustomed to theatrical behaviourism or stylised heroics, and it sounds perversely flippant, but that is not the effect of it in the theatre, and such devices give *The Chairs* a unique tautness and punch.

Granted that it lacks major conflict and ends unsatisfactorily, it must be conceded that the play carries a formidable weight of moral and psychological interest with a masterly nimbleness and the minimum of apparent effort. Ionesco's dialogue and effects are here assimilated into a total pattern of great complexity, such as is never found in minor dramatists; *The Chairs* is more than a *tour de force*. As its main theme is the old man's message to humanity, which he cannot formulate himself and is unintelligible when spoken by his mouthpiece, the play has been written off as, in the final analysis, decadent and nihilistic. The author himself has referred to the comic and tragic elements coexisting in it, but those categories are not of much help in discussing contemporary drama. It is safer to claim that *The Chairs* can be seen several times without giving less than a most profound dramatic experience; that, if one were to bear traditional forms in mind, it has classical ruthlessness and economy; and that in terms of Ionesco's development it is another exploration of the intolerable—in this case, a suspicion that life has no meaning.

IONESCO, then, considered like this, aside from any juggling with okay words such as "anti-theatre," "pseudo-drama," "burlesque," "vaudeville," and so on, is seen to be a master of stagecraft with preoccupations deeper than

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those of popular playwrights or literary dabblers in the theatre. He has acted a good deal himself and knows what can be expected from performers. He is also a close friend of Kandinsky and a connoisseur of visual art in general, so that one would be justified in paying particular attention to the visual side of his work, even if it did not proclaim itself so emphatically in performance as something organic, not illustrative or decorative only. The printed versions of his plays are peppered with footnotes referring to deviations from his requirements by various stage directors. They prove, not only that he closely studies the progress of his plays in performance, but how carefully they are conceived in terms of the total resources of drama, not confined to photographic domesticity or the static delivery of heightened language. The approach is empirical, if you like, yet informedly professional, and the result, unless you dull your response by sticking in the grooves of recent tradition, is stimulating at least.

In this country it seems to me that Ionesco, even if *The Chairs* turned out to be his apex and he faded in a diminishing sparkle of mannerisms, may turn out to be a revolutionary influence. He has cut so briskly across the routes we had mapped towards a better drama. Our so-called poetic revival, sectarian in origin, has reached a point at which Eliot is serving Aunt Edna verse she cannot distinguish from prose, and Fry, on television, sounds even more arch and pretentious than he did in the theatre. Ibsen and Chekhov have been squeezed to the dregs and anti-naturalism offers committed rhetoric, literary verse, expressionism, or scenic tricks which merely ape the cinema.

Ionesco has shown that naturalism was not the enemy at all. He uses it as and when it suits him. It was only a symptom of the disease, which is a progressive divergence of serious and popular drama. The word, relied upon to bridge this widening gap, has failed, and if one were asked to point out a flourishing branch of live theatrical art it would be the ballet. A dramatist with a strong sense of visual effect would, therefore, seem to have the present climate in his favour. (In Synge, Chekhov, and Ibsen, at their best, incidentally, there was a mastery of things seen in the theatre, although one rarely hears about it, the printed plays being easily accessible and performances relatively few.) Ionesco has shown that a play can still organise experience significantly enough to interest the most exacting connoisseur, and yet, like *Petroushka*, without its central statement ever becoming verbally explicit. But what our drama most needs is an audience not restricted to the connoisseurs and Aunt Edna. It might well be built up by intelligent development of Ionesco's approach, which is both sophisticated and popular. In my opinion *The Lesson* could be put on at, say, the Palladium, with a fair chance of success.

Laurence Kitchin

K. W. Gransden

Fifth of November

The children celebrate a failure and a treason
And make the grown-ups turn it into
Bangs and coloured lights in the dark drizzle,
A party and a holiday.

For the grown-ups have nothing to celebrate,
Nothing to transform
Into the bonfire's circle, a charm against the dark:

If they drew near, their failure might dowse the fire;
And their treason
Still crouches in a cellar, waiting to be caught.

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Krishna Baldev Vaid

A Blind Alley

A Story

YOU had better have your handkerchief on your nose, for the lane stinks awfully. Perhaps even that won't make much difference. Once a European lady is reported to have lost her way into this lane, and, as chance would have it, she didn't have a handkerchief. The poor dear fainted as soon as she entered the lane. This shouldn't scare you; for precaution, however, is not bad. No, you needn't have any fears on my account. I belong to this lane; the stink won't affect me.

You are already twisting your nose scornfully. Well, those rubbish-heaps are the emblem of this lane; they are its sentinels too; they keep strangers off. How then did that European lady stray into it? Well, I don't know. It's quite possible it's all a lie. I happened to read of it in some local paper. Yes, this lane has figured quite often in the papers.

It seems you are wondering at those brats on the rubbish heaps. They also belong to this lane. They have an undiminishing fascination for those heaps of filth. But there is a reason for that, as there is for almost everything. You see, thanks to the proximity of the town's biggest fruit-market, these chaps can sometimes discover some banana or an over-ripe mango or some eatable of that sort on these heaps. They are very fond of fruits, you see. At all events, the smell of these things is always there. You must have seen, occasionally at least, that some people have yellow, pussy sores on their lips and these sores attract flies.... You understand what I mean. I am sorry to see that you feel sick at my attempt at a poetic image. I am really very sorry.

Let's leave these chaps alone. Look! It appears they have just hit upon something, some delicacy, it seems. You can see them all pouncing upon one of those heaps. We had better go ahead. Otherwise, you may not be able to resist making peace among them. I am afraid you will spoil your clothes if you attempt that. Children are children. Their quarrels are never very serious. Let's move ahead for the lane is pretty long.

This is the first house of the lane. Maybe these hovels won't be called houses in respectable language. But my description is just for the sake of convenience. In fact, all these houses are rather peculiar, architecturally. But they are all right. They do sort of protect you from wind and sunshine. Besides, as the ancients said, what accompanies you to the final reckoning is not houses but good deeds. Let's not waste our sentiments and your time on the poverty of these houses. A house is a house as long as it is a house, big or small, open or narrow, dark or airy, it hardly matters. You'll excuse me. It is just a bad habit, this one of going off the rails. It doesn't really lie in my mouth to utter such lofty things; it was the privilege of the ancients.

So, this is the first house of this lane. A widow lives here along with her two young daughters, Satya and Paro. The widow's name is Prakshvati though she is more popularly known as Pasho. These daughters, I said, are youthful. Perhaps they are. But I was referring more to their ages, for to all

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appearances they also seem to have been widowed along with their mother. I mean they are young in years but quite worn out in looks. Hackneyed way of putting things? Yes, it is. Some people say that but for Pasho's vigilance these girls would have been married several times by now. This also is a way of putting things and certainly not a very proper way. Propriety is the least of these people's virtues. But I should make myself more explicit.

This Pasho has an abominable temper. Everybody fears her like the plague. They are fond of saying: God save us from Pasho! Every other day she is at war with some one or the other. When aroused, she blurts out a mouthful of words. She begins to beat her breasts or pull her hair and is rather hysterical in the expression of her rage. It is believed that her curses always scare their victims, for, it is admitted, she is very unhappy.

She has been a widow for as long as most people in the lane remember. Her husband, it is said, was a hawker, a vegetable-seller. He died, leaving her nothing more than a quantity of stale vegetables and these two daughters. Ever since then Pasho has been bringing up these daughters, very few people know how. They do not suspect her of any dirty deed though. In fact, nobody has ever dared to look straight at her daughters. The people in the street have a grudging sort of admiration for Pasho's having preserved the girls' virginity for such a long time.

These girls, however, are not on very good terms with their mother. Quite often they have been heard to have threatened to kill their mother or to run away from their home. Pasho is also quite loud in her regret that they were not still-born, that they have grown so big, that they are her daughters at all. The girls call her a vixen, a whore, a beast. Such domestic quarrels are quite common here. Only Pasho and her daughters are a little more demonstrative. The people of this lane enjoy these bouts. But they are always baffled a little, when every bout of fighting ends in a tearful reconciliation between the mother and the girls. That comes as an anti-climax.

THIS doesn't seem to have struck you as very queer or interesting. It isn't. I am just introducing you to the lane and I must tell you all I know. You look intrigued by those trampled garlands in front of the adjoining house. Your shock on seeing these flowers in the midst of this stink is quite natural. To me, however, these flowers are no exception to the all-pervading filth. Perhaps, I have lost my sense of smell. Well, this house is also occupied by a widow. Nobody knows her name; at least, I don't. She is popularly known as the "old witch." She is not to be seen throughout the day. She has no daughters. In the evening she returns accompanied by one or two girls, followed soon by one or two shady-looking persons. The girls have flowers in their hair, sometimes in their hands too. Next morning the same flowers are seen lying outside the house, where they keep getting entangled with the people's feet.

This old woman is very repulsive to look at. She is always chewing a betel leaf. Once I managed to have a glimpse of the interior of her room. On the wall opposite I saw a picture of Lord Krishna and just near that another picture which I couldn't see properly. I guess the second picture is that of her husband. I have no rational explanation for this guess.

They say that this old witch is remotely related to Pasho. Quite likely, but the two have no love lost for each other. They often quarrel like two mad women. Nobody ever dares to intervene when they are quarrelling. The old witch has a horrible way of lifting her dhoti, slapping her thighs, and addressing unprintable insinuations to Pasho about her daughters.

It is said she has time and again thrown an open invitation to all her neighbours: Consult me if you are ever short of money! There is a rumour that quite a few of her female neighbours avail themselves of her invitation in their hour of need which, you know, is quite frequent.

Particularly, this Phoolo, living in the house opposite, has become quite a notorious patron of the old witch. Her husband also

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knows this, it is said. He has been bed-ridden for a couple of years. He used to pull a rickshaw. That broken rickshaw belongs to him. He hopes to recover and pull it once again and turn Phoolo out of his house. Meanwhile, he depends on his wife. I think he knows he can't ever get out of his bed alive. He is just deluding himself.

Phoolo is currently carrying a child which her husband says quite openly is not his. Phoolo has often threatened to throw him out of the house on this issue. She can't tolerate his calling the unborn child a bastard. She says: "It may not be yours but it is mine and I am going to have it." You can imagine his agony.

Only a few days ago he tried to strangle himself. By chance Phoolo came in and she saw him doing it. She started shouting and a crowd collected. Instead of loosening the string round his neck, she kept on repeating: "Had I not caught him at it you would have all accused me." Then one of us stepped forward and undid the noose round the man's neck. As soon as he recovered he started shouting: "Kill me or take her away!"

But there was a wise man in the crowd. He tried to pacify the man, saying: "Don't be silly, for if you don't keep quiet she will run away with someone and you will starve to death. You should keep yourself to yourself. No one blames you for her immoral ways." On hearing this advice the man broke into tears.

I AM sorry once again. I should not have gone into all these sordid details. But now that you have come, you are in for all this. All right, we can walk a little faster through this portion of the lane; it is full of smoke. As a matter of fact, there are a few potters' kilns, and the smoke comes from them. You want to see a potter at his wheel. Not now. Let's get out of this smoke or you may get choked. Yes, these donkeys belong to the potters. I don't know much about these people. They are always very busy.

Do have a look at that cobbler. I think he is the queerest cobbler in the world. Or he wouldn't have been sitting in this lane where hardly anyone wears any shoes that he can mend. He is very old, as you can see. He is always mending the same old shoe that he has been mending, I am afraid, for the past so many years. Maybe he gets some work and I am just exaggerating. You see that hump on his back. Sometimes I have seen naughty little children pecking at his hump with their knuckles. I wonder why his curved spine has not torn his skin so far. In summer his bare body and that hump look horrible.

They say he is mad. Perhaps he is. Sometimes he is seen tearing at one of his heap of old cast-off shoes and chewing it. Then he seems to realise suddenly that it is not bread but hard and dried-up leather. He takes out those pieces from his mouth and spits at them long before he throws them up to the heaven saying: "This is for you, for you, for you!"

You better turn your face this side for I think those women are going to sit on the drain for something dirty. They shouldn't do so here but they can't do it anywhere else unless they do it in the kitchen.

In that house lives an old man with his wife. They live all by themselves. The man is about seventy. The woman must be older. He is nearly blind but he can walk a little, feeling his way with his stick. She can't walk at all. Perhaps it is paralysis or just weakness of the legs. Till a few days back she could just drag her legs about but now she is always lying in that corner like a bundle of filth. I think you can see them from here.

The old man sells groundnuts. You will be surprised to hear that he can always recognise a base coin in spite of his blindness. Of course, there can't be much scope for passing a bad coin, for his customers don't bring more than a piece or two. But he scrutinises the coin very carefully by sheer force of habit. In the evening one can see them trying to cook their food. It is an amusing sight. They often quarrel for they can't light the fire between themselves. Once or twice I helped them. But to see them eating is a gruesome spectacle. It seems the old woman cannot use her hands. The old man keeps stuffing her sick. Perhaps you would like to go back. But

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before you do that you must hear what happened a few days ago in the house where I live.

That's the house. It is quite a big house as compared to others in the lane. It has four rooms, three on the ground floor, one on the first floor. I live in the one on the first floor. You look surprised at the fact that I live here. Perhaps you never took me as seriously when I said I belong to this street. Well, I do. You see, I couldn't get a room anywhere else for ten rupees a month. Yes, I live alone. No, I am not married but I have to send money home to my parents. You needn't ask what my salary is, you can easily guess it. Yes, I have to spend some money on fees too. I am trying to improve my qualifications; I have joined a private college for "higher studies."

BUT it was not this that I wanted to tell you. I wanted to relate a curious incident that happened in the house recently. I must give you some background. You see, three families live on the ground floor. Actually, it is one family broken into three units. In one of the three rooms lives a couple with two children; in the second room lives the sister of that woman with her children. Her husband deserted her long ago. His whereabouts are unknown. Perhaps he is no more. In the third room live these sisters' father and their stepmother. They also have two children, two girls. They had a son who committed suicide some two years ago. The girls are very young, seven and nine.

All these three families are extremely poor, as poor as anyone else in the lane. You are in a hurry or I might have told you some details about these people. But you can imagine all those details if you have been listening to me at all.

The sisters are of course at loggerheads with their stepmother but they are not very friendly with each other. The children of this house look always scared because of the perpetual tension. I pity them. Their faces are always overcast with ghastly shadows. They often remind me of my own childhood.

But the real object of my narrative is the father of these sisters. He married thrice, I have been told. Both the sisters are from his first wife. The second wife bore him no child. The third is the present one; she bore him two daughters and a son who committed suicide. That happened before I came to live in this house.

I have heard that the loss of this son had a series of disastrous effects on the old man. He lost his eyesight, then his hearing, and finally his power of speech. Perhaps all this was not entirely due to the shock of the son's death. I don't know much about diseases.

But the most surprising thing was the man's insatiable appetite that bothered everybody, particular his wife, Lakshmi. She was always grumbling about this. I never believed her at first till I witnessed him swallowing as many as twenty loaves one after the other and demanding still more. Gradually this appetite became the talk of the lane. There was always a crowd of spectators in the house at meal times. The old man sat in the courtyard and the sightseers threw loaves before him, which he kept guzzling away with astonishing rapidity. And when the loaves were finished he demanded more, his hands outstretched and his mouth wide open producing a frightening moan like that of an animal.

Lakshmi addressed the crowd: "Tell me what to do!" The sisters often taunted her: "He has fed you all your life, and now that he is old you invite crowds to see that he demands food." Surprisingly enough, these sisters never seemed to be moved by their father's plight. Lakshmi often flared up whenever they spoke. She would appeal to the crowd: "Shall I fill his bottomless belly or feed these innocent girls, tell me! What should I do? If I don't give him at least twenty loaves he growls and groans. Tell me. I don't know what has possessed him!"

The spectators were often moved by what she said. But they couldn't possibly bring loaves to throw before that man every day. That lasted only a few days in the beginning, as long as their curiosity was not satisfied. The old man looked funny as well as pathetic.

At last one day . . . this happened only a

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few days back . . . the old man disappeared all of a sudden. People say Lakshmi took him away one night and left him on the beggars' bridge near the main railway station. The two sisters don't seem to mourn the loss of their father, they are generally too busy torturing their step-mother with all sorts of taunting remarks. Lakshmi seems to have lost her tongue . . . she never says anything by way of explanation. The children look even more scared. I am told they are so frightened at what has happened that they never demand more than a loaf each.

Now, I think, you can go back. This was the last house of the lane. You may walk back with your eyes closed if you like. When you feel there is no stink, you may conclude that you are out of this blind alley.

Stephen Spender

Subject: Object: Sentence

A subject thought, because he had a verb
With several objects, that he ruled a sentence.
Had not Grammar willed to him substantives
Which he came into, as his just inheritance?

His objects were *wine, women, wealth,*
A whole subordinate clause—*all life can give.*
He grew so fond of having these that, finally,
He found himself becoming too subjective.

Subject, the dictionary warned, means *being ruled by*
Person or thing. Was he not passion's slave?
To achieve detachment, he must be objective
Which meant to free himself from the verb *have.*

Seeking detachment, he studied the context
Around his sentence, to place it in perspective:
Then parsed it, made a critical analysis,
And then re-read it, feeling more objective.

Then, with a shock, he realized that *sentence*
Like *subject-object* is treacherously double.
A *sentence* is condemned to stay as written—
As in *life-* or *death- sentence,* for example.

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Richard Selig

Six Poems

When Richard Selig died last year at the age of 26, he had done and seen more perhaps, studied his art more, and travelled more widely over the possible country of his mind, than anyone of his generation. The promise of his poetry was that of vigorous early maturity. In America in his extreme youth he had a bizarre variety of jobs, graduated and then taught for a year, and a few years before his death had come to Oxford, where he began to be widely published, and where he married the Gaelic singer, Mary O' Hara, whom he met in Ireland. He went home to America, to New York, and died after about a year and a half of successful marriage.

The poetry transmuted his life rather than grossly reflected it. His earliest poems of those one was ever shown were attempts to embody passionate emotion in language and form of a rather delicate sort of beauty. This was sometimes very successful, and if, as he himself said, it was pastiche, it was unlike anyone else's pastiche. The thought of his poems was serious (that is, individual and deliberate) and vast in scope. He accepted his commitment to this age and to cities, and the commitments of compassion, and this was often his motive in writing. But for a time the vigour of his passion and the size of his thoughts gave Richard Selig's poetry the rather heavy, throbbing quality of a very powerful engine. The Phoenix, *which appeared in* ENCOUNTER, *and several of the poems of his Fantasy Press pamphlet were in that manner.*

In the last poems he wrote, the fineness of his technique, worked out to withstand high pressures, suddenly came alive into a clear and unviolent voice. These poems are turning to power without weight, flame without clinkers, art without a sediment. (Perhaps the most unalloyed of them is A Small Request, *which is printed here.) His toughness and violence and the vigour of his emotions had overlaid gentleness of sense, humour, a sort of awed quiet of mind, and in his last poems, in the face of death as well as love, these qualities clarified and set hard.*

Yet as one re-reads them, all his poems seem to fit together, not rung after rung or city after city, but like rays and aspects of a single planet. (There are hopes of collecting them in a book.) Soliloquy from New York *and* Where bubbles dawdle *are masks (or portraits) to fit the same face. I do not know which of the poems printed here fits it best.*—PETER LEVI, S.J.

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A Small Request

You who feel the instructive hand of God
Raise boils and welts upon your chosen skin,
Whose self-affliction quells the offended rod
And gets you up the hillside out of sin,

You whose suffering is a sign of grace,
You whose privilege is to feel more pain,
Whose hope is Heaven and to see God's face—
Please recall how gently falls the rain;

And when, if you remember me, you pray,
Pray thus for me: "Though he loves the earth
Too much, do not send his soul away:
Give him a small garden and a hearth."

Soliloquy From New York

Wherever turbine turns or derrick pumps,
Wherever steel and granite stands upright,
Wherever gravel rattles, concrete sets,
Rubber hums or klaxon carks the ear,
Wherever busy Mammon builds, there I am
A citizen; and there the arts like scented ladies
Gather in the museums' mutual scrutiny;
There my effete capacity for glory,
Pleasure, lust revives in darkened cinemas;
There I try my courage crossing streets;
And there, if I ignore the signs, I may
Get lost as Ulysses, and not get home.
Those heavy breathing trucks could surely eat me
Or those efficient women tear me limb
From limb. For I (this blank verse does not lie)
Am hectored Orpheus, the urban poet,
Who sings the language of cement and girders.
My words are like the thoughts of physicists.
My soul is like a great incorporation.
My heart and lungs inspire the physician,
Being full of fat and blood and air,
Susceptible to cancer, other things, and death.

My fame depends on five strategic factors:
Inclusion in anthologies and text books,
Analysis by well-known academic critics,
Citation by the leading Freudian of the day,
But best of all: a vice, and not a style,
That one can imitate; and fifth: you, fool.

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The Polestar

Here, no foothold is sure. Like huge water
The night sky flows overhead. The stars flicker.
The source of their faint radiance stands above them.
In that country the land is firm, the light is constant.

Orion hangs head down. The Dog Star's glazed look
Crosses heaven like a rabid beacon. The stiff Crab floats by.
I look for Polaris: and there, rounding its tiny circle,
My lodestar spins. All is flung in pieces, far flung.

Beneath me the cooling star-fragment I stand on
Perhaps upheavals that will smash the man-fashioned stones
I prize the most, and cast the bones that upheld the men
I most admire into lava or the depths of a new sea.

Eros

His heart held a hundred roses,
Roses red as thundering Mars:
His heart was a city full of love,
Assaulted city, sieging stars.

The rain that fell all day
From heaven, down from heaven falling,
Could not melt his heart away
Nor flood, that red vine killing.

Green stones, dark earth, O love!
The lips of all the world foretelling,
Red lips foretell that city's fall
And darkness falling over all.

With falling dark the milky stars,
Cold white stars encircled him:
Around the city heaven's wars
Did rend him limb from limb.

But limb by limb revived, O love!
The single sun came up once more.
A strange explosion in the heart
Did, in her arms, that vine restore.

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A Vision

In the factory I heard the gulls cry;
The wind distressed me as it came.
Burning of machines in a single eye
Leaves mind a fragment of hammers and hurt noise—
Who shall enter the bodies of workers, the dream
Electric; who touch the spent souls; what voice
Like God's shall come in midnight at the lamps
To hurtle this darkness of stiff limbs out
To the stars, break love open on the steel ramps,
Raise flowers in pained cylinders, so that
Complaining engines shall no more be heard
And all, all be human in the first cry of a bird?

This was Richard Selig's last work (done a week before he went to hospital). It was meant for the beginning of a poem of much greater length.

Where bubbles dawdle, green wands wave and tadpoles jerk;
Where slow pond water slowly scurling flows,
Seeming still—the sky and half the meadow mirrored;
And moderate Nature rests in pondside reeds,
Drowzes in the meadow, dreams in water volumes:
Everywhere one looks, tranquillity does soothe the gaze,
Peace placates the wild senses, and truth lies sleeping.

Look down into the pond, change your element.
Let Fancy take you. Plunge down. Your ear cannot hear,
Your lungs dare not stir. Yet the blood buzzes:
Fancy feeds you air. Your eyes are clear.
You swim among silence in the green world.

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

ITEMS:—Ilya Ehrenburg has acclaimed the novel of Roger Vailland, *La Loi*, which received this year's Prix Goncourt. The book has been severely criticised by the French Communist Party, with whom M. Vailland severed connections after Hungary.... Professor Karl Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies* has been translated into Polish and its publication is promised for the near future. At the same time, Leon Kruczkowski, the Commissar of Polish literature during the Stalin period, has become chairman of the new Cultural Commission of the Central Committee of the Party. He promptly accused Polish writers of having "lost their Socialist principles" and of indulging in an "uncritical attitude towards the West."... Bertrand Russell's *Human Knowledge* has been translated into Russian. Russell, who not long ago was described as "an exponent of reactionary political trends within contemporary imperialist ideology," is now called "the contemporary British philosopher-idealist, an active participant in the struggle for peace."... In the course of an official press conference organised in Moscow for Boris Pasternak, to give him a chance to express his "dissatisfaction" with the Western critics who "made such a fuss" about *Doctor Zhivago*, the author said: "If our publishers were wiser and permitted the publication of my book, all the present difficulties would not have arisen."

*

THE traditional Soviet attitude (since the 1930's) toward birth control was summarised by Beria, on the 34th anniversary of the October revolution: "Whereas in the camp of capitalism the imperialist cannibals are busy inventing various "scientific" means for exterminating the flower of humanity and reducing the number of births, with us—as Comrade Stalin said—the most valuable capital is man and the main concern of the State is the welfare and happiness of men." This has been, until recently, the orthodox Chinese view, too. But with the population increasing at the rate of twelve million a year, a revision of the Party line was inevitable. In 1955 there began an official movement to encourage the practice of birth control, and to spread the knowledge of contraception.

Among the methods of birth control propagated in the press some are more ancient and, perhaps, less "scientific" than those invented by the "imperialist cannibals." Thus the New China News Agency reports Yeh Hsi-Chun, Deputy of the National People's Congress, as giving the following advice:

"Fresh tadpoles coming out in the spring should be washed clean in cold well water, and swallowed whole three or four days after menstruation. If a woman swallows fourteen live tadpoles on the first day and ten more on the following day, she will not conceive for five years. If contraception is still required after that, she can repeat the formula twice, and be forever sterile.... This formula is good in that it is effective, safe, and not expensive. The defect is that it can be used only in the spring."

*

A CAMPAIGN of invective has been launched, in the Hungarian press, against Georg Lukacs, the prominent Marxist philosopher and the only member of the Nagy government who was released from prison and allowed to return to Budapest. The ex-dictator of culture under Rakosi, Jozsef Revai, himself a former student of Lukacs', has attacked his old master as one of those who "under the guise of the struggle against Zhdanovism, in fact are trying to destroy Leninism." Another ex-pupil of Lukacs', Jozsef Szigeti, now the Deputy Minister for Culture, has published a long article of 25 pages designed to "demolish" the old philosopher. Szigeti, who had already attacked Lukacs under Rakosi, but later assured him of his unfailing devotion during a debate at the Petoefi Circle in June, 1956, now blames his teacher for advocating the dissolution of the old and the establishment of a new Communist Party during the revolution. As this accusation can be just as well applied to Kadar, Szigeti hastens to add: "Lukacs was among those who helped to undermine the proletarian dictatorship but not among those who succeeded in its re-establishment." He especially excoriates Lukacs for taking too literally the slogan of "peaceful co-existence": "Lukacs put co-existence in the centre of the strategy of the working class; and, subordinating to it everything else, he forgot in effect about the contradiction between socialism and capitalism, a contradiction which became more sharp as a

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result of the imperialist attacks after the 20th Congress."

*

Habent sua fata libelli. Arthur Koestler could have hardly contemplated that Rubashov, the tragic hero of *Darkness at Noon*, would one day be evoked to serve "the revolutionary cause" again, and that it would be claimed he fulfils this purpose admirably. That is exactly what one of the Gomulkaist ideologists-in-search-of-an-ideology maintains:

"Koestler was convinced that he was pushing his hero to the limits of tragic irony. Koestler himself lost confidence in the revolution, but he left that confidence to his hero ... and thus the author's creation might turn out to be wiser than his creator.... The story of Rubashov, a tragic martyr of the Revolution, unexpectedly won followers for Communism.... The dialectical destiny of Darkness at Noon *passed from a position of being a violent argument against Communism, which was distributed to millions in cheap editions, to a position of a book which is ardently, almost propagandistically, convincing about the cause of the Revolution, even to the most die-hard sceptics, who would not succumb to a more optimistic treatment.... Koestler tried to strike at Communism, but managed to hit only those who were warping it...."* (*Z. Kaluzynski,* Polityka, *January 4–11, 1958.*)

But, despite its capacity to arouse revolutionary enthusiasm, *Darkness at Noon* has still not been published in Poland.

*

Soviet Music (No. 1, January 1958) under its new editorial board castigates the policy of the magazine under its predecessors, who were corrupted by "formalist music." The rôle of the Great Corrupter is attributed to Igor Stravinsky:

"The magazine carefully abstained from writing on the most important and influential representatives of musical modernism, and sometimes tried to smuggle in pronouncements directed to its defence and rehabilitation. Thus it published an article by M. Shaginian in which the penetration of all sorts of trash into our musical life is explained by the fact that we do not propagate the works of such composers as ... Igor Stravinsky.

"We have to note in the first place, for the benefit of M. Shaginian, that Stravinsky and jazzy trash are not at all such incompatible concepts.... Stravinsky carried out with equal readiness the orders of the Vatican and of the American 'jazzmen' or circus companies.

"Writing in a high-falutin style, M. Shaginian asserts that we allegedly close the door for our listeners 'to learn how the soul of contemporary Western man finds its expression in the great art of sound.' ..."

The magazine returns to the same leitmotif in an article by I. Nestev, "The Sacred Cacophony" (No. 2, February 1958):

"During the past year, in connection with his seventy-fifth anniversary, Stravinsky was particularly active in the genre of musical declarations. The publications in 1957 were full of his cheap philosophising, such as the interview '35 questions and 35 answers' in the British magazine* ENCOUNTER.... *The rôle of a prophet, of an apostle of the new music is very much after his own heart, and the old Stravinsky has no intention to leave the international tribune. His aphorisms are puzzling and pretentious...."*

*

The changes in the picture of the West presented at various times by the official press are the subject of an indirect comment in the Polish satirical weekly, *Szpilki*, in the form of a school-essay entitled "The life of children in the West":

"Because I am a careful reader of the press ever since the first form, I remember well that a few years ago children in the West, exploited by bad imperialists, were working hard in the mines, and selling cigarettes and newspapers at night. In the intervals they were eating what their hungry parents would give them, and when there were no parents they were searching the dustbins for scraps and eating rubbish that even a turtle would not touch in our country. The scraps were awful, not to mention the fact that they were scarce. The children were living exclusively in slums and gutters, very crowded basements, and also in attics without windows but very draughty. The Western children were barely covered by rags and were jealous of the cats and dogs of rich ladies who had everything they wanted. I do not remember well how it was, but I have certainly read in a newspaper that somewhere in the darkest West some children were eating rats—or was it the rats who were eating the children? Anyway, it was very distasteful.

"After the 20th Congress of the Party, the situation of the children in the West has improved considerably. I have read in one paper that they have many mechanical toys, which are in short supply even in our country. They also have many shops with ice-cream and sweets, and chewing-gum is sold there in automats and not in the nationalised shops. Now the children there are driven in cars, and eat the same things as adults.... They are not even badly dressed. I saw myself one boy who came from the West: he was well dressed and he had an atomic auto-

* The title of the interview, as published in ENCOUNTER, was "Answers to 34 Questions."

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matic whistle. Still, one never knows, perhaps it was for propaganda only? Such a boy for export. . . . Well, I forgot to mention the little Negroes: before they served only for lynching, and now they can become shoe-shine boys in big cities, and also work as lift-boys.

"In general I can see from our papers that children in the West are much better off now. Therefore we shall have to press hard, in this race, as in others, in order not to be overtaken by the West."

*

Ever since 1956, Bulgarian writers have been in a state of considerable ferment. The most prominent among them are Emil Manov, Todor Genov, Ludmil Stoyanov, Stefan Daskalov, and Luben Stanev.

Manov, who expressed the daring idea that "sometimes a man is more important than an institution," was bitterly castigated for his novel *An Inauthentic Case*. It describes a Party member, married and with children, who abandons his family when meeting his first love. He then gradually sinks into alcoholism and degradation, but the Party does not help him. Its functionaries are depicted as unpleasant characters, "philistines" and busybodies. The hero ends by falling into insanity. The novel created a sensation in Bulgarian literary circles.

Genov was attacked for an unproduced play, *Fear*, which was published in a Sofia magazine; Stoyanov for having written that "it is better for the writer to fall one step behind the politics of the day than to occupy a false and unrealistic position as the author of opportunist works."

The Party decided finally to settle accounts with these writers, some of whom went so far as to condemn the Soviet Union for the suppression of the Hungarian revolution and to demand complete freedom of the press. A special meeting of the Party writers' organisation was arranged for that purpose between 29th November and 1st December, 1957. The Party daily, *Rabotnicheskoe Delo* (November 21, 1957) explained that "freedom of criticism has always been the slogan of anti-Party elements, of opportunists, and enemies of socialism. . . . The Communist Party cannot allow complete freedom of views, discussion, and criticism."

At the meeting, the dissident writers were accused of all sorts of ideological deviations. Manov was deemed guilty of not showing "the constant concern of our Party for improving the living conditions . . . of the individual and of all the people." Moreover, since he had refused to admit his guilt, he was now charged with a "disdainful attitude." Ten prominent writers were also named as deviationists but they too generally revealed themselves as unrepentant; some of them confessed their errors, but not to the Party's satisfaction. The secretary of the Party organisation within the Bulgarian Writers Union, Andrei Gulyashky, warned the writers that "nobody will be permitted to abuse the Party's patience" and threatened them with expulsion unless they performed a public self-criticism.

However, the writers stoutly defended themselves. As a result, six members of the editorial board of the literary magazine, *Plamuk*, including Emil Manov and Todor Genov, were removed from its staff. *Plamuk*, founded last year, was intended as a safety-valve for the rising intellectual discontent, but became in fact a rallying point for the writers who are now branded as "revisionist."

*

Despite its glassy conformity, the Soviet press does often provide glimpses into real life—a kind of unwitting "socialist realism," as it were. Thus, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* recently described the following incident:

"Edik Sorokin decided to marry Tamara Balyasnikova and came to ask for his mamma's permission. Mamma asked Edik:

'What has she to show for herself?'

'Oh, don't worry about that,' the son said to his mamma. 'She has plenty to show for herself.'

'We'll see about that,' mamma said and sat down, pencil in hand. Mamma questioned her son as though she was not a close and loving relative, but a hardened detective. Who? What? Where? With whom? The son did not feel an injustice was being done to his girl and did not become indignant. For all the time he had been courting her he had secretly been amassing all sorts of information about her for his mamma.

Edik went to Tamara's house and, just in case, had a talk with her neighbours. Had the girl been in love before? The young man went to the college his fiancée attended, and enquired about her marks. What if his girl-friend was not receiving a stipend? Edik even dropped in to the women's consultation centre to find out whether his fiancée was not by chance registered there as a nursing mother.

But his fiancée turned out to be without a blemish. When the son came to his mamma he gave her the full particulars in true official style.

'How old is she?'

'Twenty-one.'

'How tall is she?'

'157 centimetres. She is a virgin. An honour student. She takes part in social activities. She has grey-blue eyes and blonde hair.'

'Anything else?'

'No, that's about all.'

Edik's wedding took place in September . . ."

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Shirley Letwin: JEREMY BENTHAM

ONE merit of the current delight in methodology, statistics, and "interpersonal interrelationships" is that it gives writers who once seemed utterly unreadable an air of liveliness and clarity. Among the authors thus benefited is Jeremy Bentham, who, though he lived the greater number of his long years in the 18th century, could claim neither elegance, wit, nor grandeur. Today he is of special interest as a progenitor of social scientists, and may, on that account, become once again an object of attention, even after his older reputations have faded. First known as a jurist and codifier, some historians still credit him with reforms that saved England from social disorder in the 19th century. James Mill and the Philosophical Radicals celebrated him as one of the world's great philosophers, fountainhead of utilitarian ethics and politics. But the leading young disciple, John Stuart Mill, found him lacking an essential part of philosophical wisdom and declared that, "no one, probably, who in a highly instructed age, ever attempted to give a rule to all human conduct, set out with a more limited conception either of the agencies by which human conduct is, or of those by which it should be influenced." By the close of the century the Fabians were claiming him as one of their kind, because he had advocated parliamentary reform rather than violent change. Yet at the same time they, like so many others, denounced him as the original Gradgrind and Bounderby rolled into one, a heartless propagator of mechanical and selfish individualism. Now he appears to be a very odd hybrid, combining some of the characteristic qualities of Georgian England with others that seem more nearly our own.

Although Bentham was born in 1748, a decade before Pitt and Melbourne, a year before Charles Fox, only eight years after Boswell, and was old enough to have known Burke, Gibbon, and even Hume, one can read very far in histories of the 18th century before meeting him. He never held a public post. Neither Walpole, who knew everyone, nor Burke, who reported everything important in the *Annual Register*, mentioned him; Boswell referred only to a few minor writings. As a philosopher and jurist, he might have had easy access to a society in which all who wrote were regarded as literary men, whether they were historians, judges, philosophers, ministers, dandies, or poets. But he was not to be found as a matter of course in either the drawing-rooms or the coffee houses. Even before he retired to Queen Square Place, he was barricaded in his study, piling up great stacks of illegible folios, scribbling stray thoughts on bits of paper which he pinned to the curtain. He was a hermit, who found his proper costume when he donned a brown Quaker coat, with white ribbed stockings drawn over his breeches, and let his hair fall to his shoulders. Romilly did not exaggerate much when he said that Bentham was, as usual, "seeing nobody, reading nothing, and writing books which nobody reads." For he had chosen to be, not a man of letters, but a professional.

The only great house he ever entered was Bowood, where Shelburne conducted his in-

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trigues and gathered around him a varied, though not especially brilliant, society. There Bentham began his association with Romilly and Dumont. But, though he also met Pitt, Camden, Dunning, and others, he never became a member of parliamentary circles. His friendship with Shelburne himself, during the twenty-five years it lasted, never reached the kind of intimacy that arose between Gibbon and Sheffield. He heard much political gossip, and sent little sketches of the visitors to his friend, George Wilson, but he could not think of what ideas he and William Pitt might have in common, and he participated in the conversation only by a "word now and then to keep the ball rolling" and to show he "was not a perfect ninny."

He had little use for any of the other great 18th century figures whom he met at odd times. Burke impressed him as insincere and shallow, indifferent to the happiness of the people, a mere deviser of imagery and deceit. Fox he pronounced deficient in true virtue, debauched by gaming and trickery, and redeemed by only one feature—his lately acquired fondness for botany. While he acknowledged a debt to Hume, he had no other interest in him—when Dugald Stewart published Hume's friendly advice to his rival, Robertson, Romilly was very impressed, but Bentham never noticed. Having met Johnson and become a member of one of his clubs, St. Paul's Churchyard, he still had nothing more to say of him than that, like Godwin, he "infused a tinge of melancholy" into all his books, was obsessed by religion, and provided in his writing "no facts." Goldsmith is mentioned just as the author of a work, *The Deserted Village*, that is too dismal, and in any case, untrue. The one circle in which Bentham felt at home, or at least the only club he attended at all regularly, was distinguished by a physician, an architect, an instrument-maker, and a watchmaker.

EVEN his association with men more wholly devoted to his causes was strangely impersonal. He corresponded at length with various members of Parliament. Romilly was probably Bentham's closest friend among well-established men (they were brought together, Bentham said, by their common love of "pusses"); he visited Bentham at Ford Abbey and Queen Square Place, was always interested in his projects, but as much as he liked and admired Bentham, he never shared with him more than the concern about law reform. Bentham, for his part, felt no qualms about writing a harsh leaflet opposing Romilly's candidature when he found Romilly deficient in radicalism. Brougham was also for a time something of an intimate. Bentham's salutations to him are playful and affectionate ("Dear sweet little Poppet"; "My Dearest best boy"), but there is nothing in the letters beyond talk of parliamentary reform. Brougham remained solely a mouthpiece in Parliament. It was no different with Burdett; and with Wilberforce, Bentham discussed nothing but the Panoptican, on behalf of which Wilberforce made great efforts. Only James Mill was more than a part-time friend, but then Mill, like Bentham, never ventured outside his own bailiwick.

The isolation and narrowness of Bentham cannot be blamed on his education, which was the usual one of an 18th century gentleman. After studying at Westminster, at twelve he went up to Oxford. His library at Queen's College included Voltaire's *Essay on General History*, "Paradise Lost," Molière, but mainly classics—Juvenal, Horace, Terence, Cicero, Virgil, Pliny, Demosthenes, Sallust, Lucian, and Homer. He learned Greek and Latin well enough to become adept at verses and to remember passages till the end of his life. But unlike his eminent contemporaries, his mind and style were not fashioned by ancient authors. Socrates struck him as insipid—"I could find in him nothing that distinguished him from other people, except for his manner of putting questions. This would have been good, had it been explained why, but the devil of a bit of an explanation was there." Although he admired the moral loftiness of Télémaque and was reduced to tears by Clarissa, characters and images generally left him untouched. Whether or not he was quite so earthbound during his boyhood as he remembered in old age, it seems certain that at some early stage he had learned to look for solace in impersonal facts. While still a child, on being shown a sampler picturing the temptation of Adam, he immediately noticed the disproportionate size of the apple: "It was larger than that species of the genus Orangeum which goes by the name of the forbidden fruit in some of our West India settlements." Gay's *Fables* neither

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amused nor instructed him because the stories about cocks and bulls were untrue. But one of his cousins became a favourite because he had a mind full of "knick-knackery and conceit" and vast stores of miscellaneous information. The thirst for facts led him, as a student at Lincoln's Inn, to fill his chambers with the fumes of boiling urea, and while travelling through Europe and Turkey to Russia, to gather great collections of plant and animal specimens for Shelburne, without, however, a word about the people, land, or architecture that he saw on the way. He was, in short, the opposite of the 18th century wits whom Shaftesbury described as "real, fine gentlemen, lovers of Art and Ingenuity."

Yet Bentham was not the heartless code-monger that Hazlitt made him out to be. His devotion to facts was complemented by a morbid sensitivity; a personal and intense hatred of tyranny was his strangest passion. He himself had suffered from the benefactions of an ambitious and small-minded father who had visions of a son on the Woolsack. Interference by do-gooders and neighbours disturbed him at least as much as the tyranny of the state. "Liberty of conscience, liberty of the press, liberty of opinion at large, all these," he said, "are in one place or another established. The last that remains to be established, and which yet, in its whole extent, is scarcely so much as advocated, is liberty of taste." Bentham's enmity to the Pharisees was shared by many of his contemporaries. But his professionalism and isolation gave this interest a turn unusual for his age.

THE moral system Bentham devised, on the principle of utility, was designed to protect liberty of taste against the most well-intentioned tyrants. All other moral systems, including Hume's theory of moral sentiment, he felt, consisted "in so many contrivances for . . . prevailing upon the reader to accept of the author's sentiment or opinion as a reason, and that a sufficient one, for itself." Bentham made his utilitarianism proof against tyranny by sanctioning no moral hierarchy. His one injunction is to maximise pleasure, and pleasure, as he defined it, includes anything from which men derive satisfaction, be it wine or philosophy. Bentham's principle of utility is indeed, as John Stuart Mill said, nothing but an exhortation to be prudent. But Mill, despite his feelings about the oppressiveness of public opinion, was interested mainly in improving men, by law if necessary. His criticism of Bentham's doctrine arose out of his fear that it would do nothing to improve the moral tone of its followers or of the community at large. Such misgivings were foreign to Bentham; although his standards were not very different from Mill's and he valued a benevolent disposition and scholarly pursuits as much as any gentleman of his or Mill's age, it was the dangers of enforcing the moral hierarchy too severely that worried him.

He scoffed at those who defined liberty as the right to do what does not injure others; it means, he insisted, the right to do whatever one wants. When that right must be limited in order to protect the equal rights of others, the restriction, however much justified, should not be confused with "liberty." The mild paternalism that Hume and Burke tolerated and even cherished as part of the British system irritated Bentham as much as the endless costs of litigation. He considered it, in the first place, presumptuous. It assumed that a member of parliament could know what another man, whom he had never met, felt and needed better than did that man himself. It was, besides, undignified, for it treated grown men like children. Some men, perhaps, need to be guided by others, but if so, the need and the result are deplorable. "Pupilage being a state of dependence is an evil which ought to cease as soon as it is possible without occasioning a greater evil." He granted that all men must somehow be restrained for the good of others—society must put "bridles in our mouths" to prevent "our doing mischief to one another"—but to direct a man for his own good is quite another matter; "the tacking of leading strings upon the backs of grown persons, in order to prevent their doing themselves a mischief, is not necessary either to the being or tranquillity of society, however conducive to its well-being."

His feeling for the variety and ultimate privacy of human wants made Bentham anxious to restrict the activities of government. It was, he said, one vast evil, and not simply because the rulers may be less than holy or omniscient. Government must rule by general laws, which necessarily disregard differences among men and circumstances.

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A general law must assume a perfectly smooth and flat surface where there are in fact many ridges and furrows; it must treat large numbers of men as if they were as uniform as grains of sand. Moreover, any act of government involves coercion. That punishment inflicts pain is obvious, but Bentham pointed out that reward is no less painful. The money bestowed upon one man can only have come from taxes on others, and therefore represents the pain of loss that they suffered. Even rewards of honour are costly to someone, for honour means pre-eminence, and if one man is elevated, another must suffer for being made the lower of the two. Every law, whatever its nature, imposes "the evil of coercion or restraint; or the pain which it gives a man not to be able to do that, whatever it be, which by the apprehension of the punishment he is deterred from doing." Even when a law requires a man to act as he would generally, it coerces at least in the sense that it forces him to ignore any temporary dislike he may feel for such action. In the background of a law there is, besides, the possibility of punishment. So that whatever good a law may do in the long run, it is certain "in the first instance to produce mischief. . . . No law can ever be made but what trenches upon liberty. . . . To make a law is to do evil that good may come." A law cannot be justified, Bentham argued, simply by finding something in its favour; the benefits it will bestow must outweigh the general reason against every law.

One of the corollaries to this general criticism of law is Bentham's conviction that economic affairs should be regulated as far as possible by competition. He nevertheless described some circumstances in which the government should supplant private enterprise. The government must, he said, provide for bare subsistence, for here the usual objections do not hold—the pain of hunger can be relieved in all men by fairly uniform methods, and is undoubtedly greater than any pain inflicted by taxes necessary to provide for the indigent. The government must also provide for national security. In sum, it should, without interfering directly, make it as easy as possible for men to satisfy their own wants by their own efforts. One of its most important tasks is consequently to protect property and eliminate the fear of losing what one has earned. But government need not, and should not, do more to make men to increase their wealth. All men have a natural incentive to gather wealth. Beyond that, they must be left free to decide whether they prefer the pleasures of idleness to those of industry. A government that does not recognise the freedom to indolence exaggerates the necessity of wealth. In any case, the government's attempts to encourage some activities produces injustice—for the funds or the privileges that the government distributes to some members of the community must be taken from others. Bentham acknowledged the propriety of the Navigation Act, but only because it served the common need for a strong navy, rendering national benefits more important than the injustice to individuals outside the shipping industry. But where there is no such common interest to be served, he insisted, government subsidies arbitrarily take enjoyment from one man and give it to another. Such interference is anyway bound to be inefficient. A government official who has neither the intimate knowledge, the experience, nor the personal incentive of the private entrepreneur cannot decide as well how capital is best employed. Should a minister somehow receive special information, he can make it available to the public. Bentham was disposed to favour any efforts by the government to spread information; he urged that the government require clear labelling of poisonous substances, and establish brands or marks for quantity and quality. Such activities could be encouraged because, without coercing, they give the individual better means for fulfilling his wants. He had no utopian faith in a natural harmony of interests, nor did he expect ideal results from a competitive economy. But he was convinced that the evils of such a system would be far less than the injustice and inefficiency inevitable when the government attempts to take the place of individual enterprise. He made the principles clear, without, however, insisting on any specific rules, leaving the exact limits of government intervention to be set in accordance with the circumstances.

It was sensitivity to the feelings and wants of men living here and now, not deduction from an abstract dogma, that led Bentham to individualism; he saw on every side a dangerous willingness to sacrifice men to some

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unknown and undefinable good. For the same reason, he made war on terms like "public interest" and "public good," and reminded his readers that "the people is nothing more nor less than an indefinite number of the same community." "To sacrifice" individual interests to the "public interest" is either a tautology or else it means giving the interests of some individuals pre-eminence over those of others. A government acting in the name of "public interest" is really giving "a question in itself simple, an air of profundity and political mystery" and frightening timid citizens out of questioning its policies. Bentham objected even to the practice of being charitable to the dead because it exempted rulers from censure by posterity.

IF THIS were all, Bentham might take the lead among sensible political thinkers distinguished for their freedom from formula and their willingness to seek the least evil, rather than the ideal, in practical matters like politics. The 18th century could then claim him as all its own. But there is more to the story. If Bentham set himself up as the great antagonist of vague, abstract words, he was also the first deliberate corrupter of English. He coined new words, which, with a few exceptions, are by common consent monstrous; he outlawed verbs in favour of substantives and would never write "to move" if he could use "to give motion"; he insisted on embedding all qualifications within each sentence as if it were the last he would ever write. Hazlitt declared that high treason wrapped up in one of his inextricable periods "would never find its way into Westminster Hall." The wrappings not infrequently made sentences as bulky as the following:

> But, so far as concerns acquisition, finding that operation, necessary as it is to human existence, loaded notwithstanding, to wit, by the influence of the above-mentioned causes, with the sort of reproach involved in the import of the several articles, in the long list of dyslogistic appellatives exhibited in the Table,—and at the same time not provided with eulogistic, nor so much as with neutral appellatives,—thence, in their endeavours to obtain for it the approbation of their hearers or readers,—and for that purpose to elude the force of the dyslogistic appellatives, which in a manner lie in wait for it, unable to find for the desire in question any appellative, which, by its eulogistic quality, would be rendered applicable to their purpose,—men put aside that species of desire, and look out for some other, which, being furnished with eulogistic appellatives, shall, at the same time, be nearly enough resembling to it, or connected with it, to be made to pass instead of it.

In other words—men try to avoid being called acquisitive.

The scientific ambitions that led Bentham to express a simple idea with such preposterous precision led him also to invent an extraordinary series of devices which might, if one knew nothing more, make him seem merely an eccentric though ingenious "gadgeteer." He not only devised a novel method for preparing tea, and installed in his house a central heating system, but found a way of both securing greater accuracy in census-taking and paying for it in one stroke —by entrusting it to the minister of each parish, and paying by the number of heads counted, with penalties for omissions or false reports. He invented a method for preventing forgery of bank notes, and suggested a cure for the friction between England and Ireland—that the United Kingdom be named Brithibernia. To this, Lord Holland, who received the suggestion, replied that while names undoubtedly had a great influence upon mankind, it was less certain that princes had the power to change them. He was convinced that drunkenness and disorderliness among Irish immigrants to America could be entirely eliminated by a programme of evening classes. In 1800 he was very much occupied with arrangements for a Frigidarium, a sort of ice-house for preserving fermentable substances, which he hoped to put on a commercial basis, and planned the details to the point of suggesting that it be a "frustum of a globe mounted on a cylinder, about sixteen feet diameter clear in the inside." And of course, like all "gadgeteers," he was devoted to the duodecimal system, and a universal language, in the form of figures.

These were but minor contraptions besides the Panopticon, to which he devoted more than a decade of time and anxiety. There were, Bentham had noticed, a number of institutions, especially prisons, in which constant inspection was required, and he found a way to make this possible at very little expense. Such institutions, he proposed, should be constructed on a circular plan, with a

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perimeter of cells facing the centre, and separated by a ring-like open space from an inner block or tower. This would house the inspector and his family, the more numerous the better, as all could share in watching. Poor houses, manufactories, mad-houses, hospitals, might also adopt this plan. The possibilities were endless; morals would be "reformed, health preserved, industry invigorated, instruction diffused, economy seated as it were on a rock, the Gordian knot of the poor laws not cut but untied, all by a simple idea in architecture."

There is an odd combination of thoughtfulness and unfeeling ingenuity in the scheme. Bentham's suggestion that such imprisonment should replace punishment by transportation, that work in such institutions should be productive, conversation permitted, solitude avoided, and even marriage allowed, that the prisoners be given adequate diet and clothing—all these show real human sympathy. Yet Bentham never stopped to think of how dreadful it might feel to be under perpetual observation, not only by the keeper but, as he suggested, by the public as well, nor of the dangers of letting the overseer finance the prison by profits from the inmates' labour. Of a criminal's outlook on life he had not a glimmer. He became so obsessed by the Panopticon's infinite virtues, that the necessity to scrap it was one of his life's tragedies.

THIS habit of mind dominated him when he turned to matters of law reform. One of the chief defects of the English legal system was, he thought, the common law, and the cure he swore by was codification. There were indeed perfectly understandable reasons for his antagonism to "unwritten" law—judges in the 18th century did not scruple to legislate in the name of common law or under cover of an appeal to precedent. No doubt it is always difficult to draw the line between the decision that merely adopts or extends the common law and one that arbitrarily overrules precedents, and the importance of this distinction was much less emphasised in Bentham's time than now; he was quite right in accusing judges of usurping legislative powers. Yet it seems equally evident that Bentham did not, and could not, understand the peculiar virtues of the common law, just as he did not fully appreciate the nature of legal fictions. The common law, he said, was "imaginary law made on each occasion by each man for his own use," it has "not so much as a shape to appear in—not so much as a word which anybody can say belongs to it—which is everywhere and nowhere—which comes from nobody and is addressed to nobody"; it is dog law—"when your dog does anything you want to break him of, you wait till he does it, and then beat him for it . . . this is the way judges make law for you and me." It is odd that Bentham should have been so oblivious to how the elasticity of the common law had given stability to the government while allowing liberties to be gradually extended. But Bentham's indignation at the uncertainty of the common law quite blinded him to the flexibility. He gave a certain grudging recognition to the usefulness of legal fictions as a means of adapting law to a changing society. But the regard for precedent was, he said, "an expedient employed for supporting abuse against utility and reason; precedent being an avowed substitute for reason, and all precedents the result of the predominance of the sinister interests of the ruling few." Bentham's passion for codification rendered great services to English law—he did much to make England more sensitive to the tangle of crimes and punishments which led humane juries to acquit the guilty so as not to punish petty crimes with extreme penalties. But his hopes for codification were beyond reason; in this, as in so much else, he tried to isolate one aspect, the technical form of the law, from all else. If he admitted that Bonaparte's code had been inadequate, he was certain that his own method would "render to all really existing law the same sort of service as that which by copper sheathing is rendered to ships." "Citizen," he thought the legislator could then say, "what is your condition? Are you a father? Open the chapter, 'Of fathers.' Are you an agriculturist? Consult the chapter, 'Of Agriculture.'" "The father of a family, without assistance, might take it in his hand and teach it to his children, and give the precepts of private morality the force and dignity of public morals." Flexibility could be built into a law code, Bentham suggested, by allowing judges to write amendments and transmit them to the legislation minister for ratification. However, when he tried to write

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codes, he was not very successful. He never completed his penal code for England; his code of evidence is hardly a code at all—compared to Fitzjames Stephen's code, based on the practices of contemporary English law and worked out in specific detail, his is little more than a collection of shrewd maxims.

Far from being helpful, some of Bentham's legal suggestions might have endangered what he prized most, and show how easily his way of looking at law can lead to a sacrifice of constitutional safeguards. He lightly dispensed with the jury, which had made English justice an object of envy to all who loved liberty. The inconvenience, delay, and expense that the jury system involved, the ease with which jurors could be intimidated or influenced disgusted Bentham. His remedy was a quasi-jury of three to five men who should simply watch the judge, interrogate if necessary or ask for a rehearing, but who would otherwise be powerless. His proposals for revising the law of evidence were no less dangerous. He would, for instance, have eliminated all restrictions on hearsay evidence; he saw no reason why the judge and jury should not decide the value of any and all testimony, and it apparently never occurred to him that they might lack the great discrimination and detachment which ought to accompany such wide discretion. He suggested rating the testimony of witnesses mathematically; the witness would say, "my belief is ten or five degrees on the positive side, or ten or five degrees on the negative side; just as in speaking of the temperature indicated by the thermometer, we say that the mercury is ten degrees above zero." In spite of his heightened sensitivity to the dangers of power, he would have abolished the privilege of refusing to incriminate oneself. Such protection was only necessary, he said, while there were still High Prerogative Courts; since that time, it has been invoked only by the guilty and never by the innocent. He ridiculed also the privilege of husbands and wives not to testify against each other. "No asylum," he said, "ought to be opened for criminals; every sort of confidence among them must be destroyed, if possible even in the interior of their own houses."

One might expect such vagaries from a reformer who was convinced that power would be rendered harmless once current evils were corrected. But Bentham had no such dreams. Unlike James Mill, and the younger philosophical radicals, he never divided society into "the people" and their "oppressors." He thought not in terms of classes, but of individuals, who must all, for political purposes, he felt, be assumed to be knaves, even though some few were truly benevolent. And yet, in his recommendations for improving the law of evidence, he was willing to sacrifice the safeguards for the innocent in order to increase the likelihood of punishing the guilty.

HE HAD become entirely absorbed in one aspect of a problem and could see nothing else. This triumph in his work on legal procedure of Bentham's professional tendencies over his common sense was the natural consequence of his method. If Bentham exaggerated the merits of logical analysis, it was not, however, simply because he had seen too little of human nature, as John Stuart Mill charged, or was indifferent to human feelings, but rather because he was too intolerant of ordinary human weakness. At thirteen, he refused to accept the necessity of signing the thirty-nine articles; as he grew older, he found more and more confusion, deceit, and tyranny in society, and his intolerance increased with his disillusionment. He set out to cure these ills by dividing the world into small, sealed-off cells, and trying to establish perfect order in one after another. He would not even acknowledge that the ambiguity of words was inescapable, that however well or honestly men tried to communicate with one another, something would be misunderstood or grasped without having been said. He was, in this respect, the very opposite of the rationalist who tries to solve all problems in a single great sweep; his utopianism consisted rather in the belief that if only one precisely analysed and perfectly solved each small problem in turn, all the errors that had so long gone unquestioned could be avoided and perhaps ultimately deception and tyranny could be defeated.

He not only refused to discuss certain questions, but trained himself to read and think just what was immediately relevant to his purpose. He outlawed intuition and imaginative language, eliminated any stray metaphors and sank all contraband thoughts. History and literature could not influence him because he picked out only what was

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pertinent to the problem uppermost in his mind and ignored the rest. Whereas Hume could not rest until he had explored the nature of religious belief, Bentham declared that he cared not "two straws about liberty and necessity at any time." He wondered no more about the real nature of things than the most scientific of 20th century scientists, and had he been asked whether he could really understand men by analysing their pains and pleasures, he would most likely have shrugged away the question as meaningless. In his complete indifference to any such speculation, he was quite unlike the men whom he claimed as his inspiration. Newton hoped to explain the nature of the universe, not merely to contrive a useful theory. If Bacon praised observation and opposed hasty generalisation, if he separated the truth of science from the truth of religion, he retained both and continued to fasten the "upper link of Nature's chain" to "Jupiter's throne." He allowed some place for the "marvelling temper," for the capacity to remain "in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason." But Bentham built high barriers against any intimation of mystery and shut himself up behind them. He was so anxious to escape any uncertainty, and the freedom it leaves for slippery judgment, that he reduced all excellence in a legislator to his scientific paraphernalia. He would not concede that legislation is an art requiring not technicians but men who clearly understand a few fundamental principles and are able and willing in the light of these to adapt a traditional system of law to changing wants. So he could not see that Burke's "deceitful images" might be less dangerous than his own weird precision. Every problem became for him a simply mechanical one; if the right screw were turned, the leverage shifted, or a worn part replaced, all would be well. He became so enamoured of his system that he felt no hesitation about offering to make codes for countries he had never seen, although he knew that it was difficult to impose new laws, and recognised theoretically the "influence of time and place." To write his *Political Tactics*, by his own account, he simply cut and hacked without mercy the practices of the British Parliament and reassembled them in accordance with his principles, for the newly created French Assembly. Whereas Hume, although not much more inclined than Bentham to trade in mysteries, allowed for their existence, and Burke made them fundamental to his political philosophy, Bentham tried to dispel them.

But if Bentham's proposals lack insight, they reflect a certain restraint which his followers and successors have lacked. He confined himself to a limited undertaking, legal reform, without attempting to explain and direct somehow the whole of human nature and experience. When he advocated annual elections and universal suffrage, or argued that the representative should be purely a delegate, and the House of Lords eliminated, he was concerned only with increasing public control over the government. He overlooked a number of other problems that might be raised by his proposals. Yet he did not inflate democracy into a cure for mankind's spiritual ills; nor did he parade it as the only form of government sanctioned by true philosophy. He had great faith in it, but merely as a device for achieving particular objectives. For he thought of himself neither as a prophet nor as philosopher in the usual sense. He was, he said, "a hard-working, painstaking man; a lawmaker by trade—a shoemaker is a better one by half." The Fall of Man was outside his province—it was sufficient for him to investigate the species of the apple. Instead of exploring either widely or profoundly, he turned his natural inventiveness to elaborating the details of social and mechanical contrivances, many of which have proved very suggestive; all that he cared about was that his theory should be beneficial. It is this reluctance to give his contrivances spiritual significance that marks him as an 18th century Englishman. The lack of his common sense and sympathy with living human beings permitted James Mill to inflate Bentham's methodology for reform into a metaphysics. And it is not surprising that John Stuart Mill, who was thoroughly infected by the 19th century urge to find universal importance in the most mundane facts, should have seen in Bentham's unwillingness to look beyond the limited practical tasks he had set himself only a lack of insight. Twentieth century social scientists share Bentham's professional frame of mind and his enthusiasm for social gadgets but none of his humility.

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LETTER FROM KUALA LUMPUR

A Shortage of Malays

I ARRIVED in Kuala Lumpur very soon after the day of Merdeka, i.e., the achievement of independence. Malaya was then the youngest independent state in the world and, I am sure, I ought to have been moved to deep and elevating thoughts. But during the first days of my stay I kept thinking of an old yellow newspaper cutting I have had in my possession for over twenty years. I had cut it out of a Budapest evening paper in the mid-thirties and, in the largest capitals and the blackest type, it read: NO SENSATIONAL EVENT HAS OCCURRED TO-DAY.

Why not? Well, things are seldom what they seem. The achievement of independence was not really the achievement of independence for two diametrically opposed reasons. First, no state can be really independent nowadays. It can be as independent as, say, Great Britain, but no more. Secondly, even within the limits of possibility, Malaya did not become independent on 31st August, 1957: to all intents and purposes it had been independent for the two or three preceding years. Merdeka was the formal celebration of Malaya's becoming something it did not really become; and also of its becoming something it had already been.

Then again the achievement of independence was an anti-climax for many. It all went too smoothly, too rapidly—and this was the fault of the British, who had granted her independence for the asking. The unfortunate Malay leaders were thus deprived of their chance of spending long spells in prison and otherwise suffering for their country. They would no doubt have endured imprisonment as bravely as the Indians, but they were less lucky. This unfortunate fact diminishes their popularity in many youthful eyes. Now the Queen of England has been replaced by a Malay king; the British ruling class by a Malay ruling class; the excellent and efficient administration—trained and built up by the British—goes on doing its excellent and efficient work exactly as before. The country is prosperous, indeed rich, by Asian standards. So how can she solve burning questions if she cannot find any?

Luckily, there are *some* problems.

Malaya is supposed to be a country of Malays but it isn't really. (Before going any further, I had better define certain terms. A *Malayan* is an inhabitant of Malaya, irrespective of race or creed; a *Malay* is a member of the Malay race and a Moslem; while a *Malaysian* comes from the common stock of Malays and Indonesians. So, for example, a Chinese can be a Malayan but he cannot be any more a Malay than a Malay can be a Chinese. A Malay can also be a Malayan and so can an Indian but the Indian can never be a Malaysian. And so on.) The main problem of Malaya is a shortage of Malays. There are too many Chinese in China; there are too many Indians in India; but there are not enough Malays in Malaya. Official statistics assure you that there are *nearly* three million Malaysians but *more* than three million others—Chinese, Indians, and Europeans. But Malaysians, as I have clearly explained above, are not all Malays. All one can fairly say is that the Malays form the largest single group in their country. Even this, however, remains only true as long as Singapore remains a separate unit, a British colony. If you add Singapore's one and a quarter million to Malaya's population with its more than 900,000 Chinese, then the Malays no longer find themselves even as the largest single group. To mention this is regarded as rather tactless; to state it as openly as I have done, is definitely bad manners. Just as the threat of racial riots hanging over Merdeka was never mentioned, so this shortage of Malays is not discussed in Malaya.

The "shortage of Malays" is both absolute and relative; and it also means an almost complete absence of a Malay middle class. The Sultans, the aristocracy, the top layer of society, and the civil service are Malays; so are many of the road-sweepers, navvies, and taxi-drivers. And, first of all, the peasants, populating the many kampongs, wearing the inevitable sarong and the equally inevitable friendly smile on their lips. But the number of independent Malay lawyers, doctors, and accountants (the three put

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together, I mean) in Kuala Lumpur is under half a dozen. There are not enough Malay undergraduates at the university. You will not find a Malay hotel among the 156 hotels of Kuala Lumpur and not one really good Malay restaurant in the capital of Malaya. A Malay hotel is to be opened shortly. The absence of a good Malay restaurant, it should be added, is also due to the fact that the Malays dislike eating in public as much as the Chinese love it. The Malay kitchen has a wonderful speciality, the *satay* (small chunks of beef on coconut stalks, roasted in a spicy sauce over charcoal). You go and eat *satay* in Chinese restaurants.

I liked Malaya very much but I suffered two bitter disappointments on the very first day. I had known two Malayan words before my arrival: kampong and tiffin. (Tiffin, I found out later, was not really Malayan.) So I wanted to see a kampong (a Malay village, in case you do not not know) and have tiffin.

The first morning after my arrival a friend drove me from Singapore to a kampong on the mainland, in Johore. We went through Johore Bahru, the capital of that state, and reached the village.

"Is this a typical Malay kampong?" I asked.

My friend shook his head.

"No. Not a very typical one."

"What's wrong with it?" I enquired.

"There is nothing really wrong with it," he explained. "But you see, *all* the people in this village are employed by the B.B.C."

On some reflection he added:

"Which is not truly typical of the whole of Malaya."

He looked guilty. He took me home for tiffin.

And then I suffered my second disappointment. Tiffin is an excellent meal. But it is dangerously like lunch.

THE Chinese in Malaya occupy a unique position. I know of no other country where the entire middle class has been imported from abroad. Nor has the Malayan brand of perfect division of labour any parallel anywhere else: the Malay upper classes hold almost all the political power; but economic power is entirely in the hands of the Chinese.

The Chinese have a deep-rooted complex as have many other people (probably including myself) who belong neither here nor there. These Chinese live in Malaya but they are not Malays; on the other hand as they have lived in Malaya for generations they are not quite Chinese either. They are only Straits Chinese. (It is true, of course, that there are now considerable numbers of Chinese in Malaya who came from China and are trying to make a lot of money as quickly as possible before returning to the motherland. It is also true that more and more of these change their minds and stay on.) The Straits Chinese are, on the whole, determined to prove two things: (a) that they are true Malayans; (b) that they are true Chinese. These aims are neither contradictory, nor are they dishonest in the least. Malaya is, after all, their home but their culture is Chinese and they have every right to be proud of it. China is a distant and often unknown land for them and she certainly looks more attractive and alluring from Selangor or Penang than she does from the vicinity of Hong Kong. The emigré's relationship to his country of origin is a complex one. I know it only too well; I have been a Straits Hungarian long enough.

Retail trade and all the professions are almost exclusively in the hands of the Chinese. The Malays do not really resent this. Nor do they hold it against the peaceful Chinese citizens that terrorism used to be entirely a Chinese affair. What they do resent is the feeling that many Chinese look down on them which many of the Chinese indeed do, some on intellectual grounds, others because "we pay all the taxes here." Not that the Straits Chinese are such scrupulous and zealous tax-payers as all that. Malaya is the only country in the world where there are more automobile owners than income tax payers.

The Malays are not only charming but also sensible people. They often tell their English friends: "Without your help we could not have achieved all this." And they mean it. The English, on their part, were quick enough to forget the old days of the white *tuan*. It can still happen sometimes that an Englishman gives two different parties to two different sets of friends—but he does that sometimes in London, too.

Yes, far from there being tension, there is racial peace in Malaya—unlike Singapore. The rôles are neatly cast and each race is prepared to play his allotted part. The races do not compete, they complement one another. They live side by side; they cannot live really together. Chinese and Malays cannot eat together (as most Chinese dishes contain pork) and they cannot drink together (because the Malays must not drink). So they can hardly mix even if they wanted to. In any case, the main reason for this peaceful co-existence is the common-sense, tolerance, wisdom, and easy-going philosophy of the Malays. They are a proud people and devout Moslems but somehow all the dark, dogmatic and fanatical traits, identified in some countries with Islam, have just melted into their hands as Buddhism melted in Siam. Islam in Malaya has become mild, attractive, and even smiling. Well, why not? In some countries even Christianity is Christian.

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MALAYA, on becoming independent, decided on a monarchical constitution. The various Malayan states were formerly ruled by Sultans and one of these was now elected paramount ruler, the King of Malaya.

The honour fell to the Sultan of Negri Sembilan, Abdul Rahman. Malaya, by the way, is the only country in the world where the King and the Prime Minister have the same name. To make the matter even more complicated, both Abdul Rahmans are princes, Tunku or Tuanku in Malay. The election of Tuanku Abdul Rahman ibni-l-marhum, Tuanku Muhammad, K.C.M.G., caused some surprise. He was only third in seniority among the Sultans. But his two seniors, the aged and celebrated Sultan of Johore and the Sultan of Pahang could not be elected for very different reasons.

The Sultan of Johore, Major-General Sir Ibrahim, D.K., S.P.M.J., G.C.M.G., G.B.E. (Mil.), G.C.O.C. (1), is eighty-five years old and has been on his throne for sixty-three years. But it was not his old age, although this was pleaded as an official excuse, that prevented him from becoming king. He simply did not want the job. In the early stages he even objected to Malayan independence and thought that his country ought to maintain a closer tie with Britain, although his was the last Malay state to accept a British adviser. The Sultan of Johore is a strange mixture of great ruler and fabulous, old tyrant, and he is not exactly enthusiastic about "more power for the people." His resistance to Malayan independence was eventually broken but he still refused to become King himself, and though his former hostility has by now mellowed into nothing more than a stern frown, he still does not really approve of the new state. And in any case, he wants to spend most of his time in London, not in Kuala Lumpur.

The Sultan of Pahang, Sir Abu Baker Ri', had to be discreetly passed over for a different reason. He had married one wife too many: five, instead of the permitted, desirable, and moral four. In addition, the fifth wife used to be a cabaret singer which would have endeared her to my heart but I had no say whatsoever in the matter. Sir Abu is a light-hearted and easy-going gentleman, extremely popular and much loved in his own state in spite of his matrimonial mistake. But he could not become King of Malaya because he did, undeniably, over-marry.

Tuanku Abdul Rahman, the new King, is sixty-three years old. He is an English barrister, a member of the Inner Temple. He was called to the Bar in 1928 and became Sultan—or to be precise not Sultan but Yang di-Pertuan Besar, which means something like His Highness the Greatest Gentleman—in 1933. He came to England to attend the Coronation in 1937 and on several other occasions since. Tuanku Abdul Rahman now lives in Kuala Lumpur, having severed his connections with Negri Sembilan. His son acts as Regent for him.

The Malayan monarchy presents two curious features:

1. It is not a hereditary monarchy. When King Abdul Rahman dies, his fellow-Sultans will elect his successor from their own ranks. The King of Malaya is an elected monarch, as the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire were between the 13th and 19th centuries.

2. Many people believe that, paradoxically, the establishment of the monarchy will lead to the extinction of the monarchy in Malaya. The argument is that the existence of the paramount ruler will lead to the decline, waning, and final disappearance of the individual Sultans; then, in turn, the extinction of the individual Sultanates will lead to the decline and final extinction of the monarchy.

IT IS always interesting to observe how other people live; in Malaya it is equally interesting to observe how other people die. You cannot sojourn very long in the country without noticing the Death House.

The Death House is a Chinese institution. People are sent there to die, because the Chinese regard it as bad luck if people die at home. Yet, the Death House seems to be a fairly gay place on the whole. I watched the one in Johore Bahru for a long time. Relations were sitting at little tables outside the house chatting and playing mah-jong. They are in the habit of playing on till late in the night—I was told—and the rattle of the mah-jong bricks rather disturbs the nocturnal peace of the neighbourhood. The gaiety is neither irreverent nor is it impious: all Chinese funerals are gay, the colour worn for mourning is white, and death is regarded as something of a practical joke on God's part. I fully agree with the Chinese. Why should leaving this world be any sadder than entering it? Death is, after all, in a way more natural than birth. All people die; but the great majority of us are never born.

So the relations wait outside and the honoured father, grandmother, or whoever the person may be, waits inside. The patient inside is always more impatient than those outside, because he cannot play mah-jong. What a person feels when he is hastily dispatched into the Death House, I cannot say. Nor can I say, for that matter, what a person may feel—not in Malaya but in England—on being taken through a doorway bearing the inscription in huge letters, HOSPITAL FOR INCURABLE DISEASES.

Malays have no Death Houses of their own.

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They eat at home; they live at home; they die at home.

"A Malay, often a well-educated Malay at that," a Malay friend of mine told me, "will call in the doctor if he is ill. If the doctor is of no help, he will call a witch-doctor. He doesn't believe in him, of course; but just in case. The chemist, by the way, will be Chinese. In most Chinese chemist shops you can see magic herbs as well as boxes or bottles containing penicillin and bicarbonate of soda. But he won't go to hospital because if he is to die he wants to die at home. A Malay must be really on his last legs to agree to be taken into hospital."

"Isn't that rather illogical?" I asked.

"Why illogical?"

"If someone has nothing seriously wrong with him he has no reason for not going to hospital. But if one is mortally ill and wants to die at home, surely, he ought to stay at home."

My friend fell silent for a minute.

"I never thought of that," he said at last. "And never shall. One only goes to hospital in case of mortal danger. Because one wants to die at home. That is the way it is."

But for me Malaya was first of all Somerset Maugham country. Mysterious, luscious, violent. I was prepared to see murders and lonely suicides and I expected people to draw me aside after the third whisky and soda and tell me about long-forgotten homicides they had committed. Nothing of the sort. Indeed, I found the story of Malayan rubber more interesting than most of the planters I met. What is so fascinating in that story? I see in it evidence that some grow rich through inheritance, others by hard work, and others again by sheer good luck. Malaya got rich on good luck—at least as far as her income from rubber is concerned. Tin is also produced but there is nothing extraordinary about Malayan tin. Tin has been mined by man for four thousand years and Malaya herself was a known tin-exporter in the 9th century A.D. Rubber is an altogether different story. The gist of it is that the Director of the Singapore Gardens, Henry Nicholas Ridley, suggested in 1888 that South American rubber trees should be imported via Kew Gardens and planted in Malaya. The idea was laughed at and strongly resisted. But Ridley was adamant and when in 1911 he retired, as an old-age pensioner of modest means, Malaya was already one of the world's most important rubber-producing countries. And yet the Marxists go on talking of "historical inevitability." If Corsica had not been attached to France (as Bertrand Russell has pointed out) and Napoleon Bonaparte had been born an Italian citizen, the history of Western Europe would have been very different; and if the Director of the Singapore Gardens had been a less stubborn man and had insisted with less obstinacy on what seemed an idiotic whim, Malaya might not be to-day a rich and independent country.

TRACING Mr. Maugham's own footsteps, I went to The Dog—the famous Selangor Club. It is a very pleasant place. Its Indian porter is one of the most impressive and magnificent figures I have ever seen. Food is good; drinks are cheap; conversation is as spirited as in any London Club (which is qualified praise); and the hospitality of members is lavish. I asked the Russian-born secretary whether the Club was still exclusive.

"Very exclusive indeed," he replied. "But if you mean racially exclusive, well, then we are not."

"You have Asian members?"

"Plenty of them. Asians are welcome."

I asked for, and obtained, permission to take some film at lunch-time next day for B.B.C. television. My crew of cameramen and other technicians arrived on time; I was having a drink with some members at the bar, waiting for more people to arrive. I saw no Asians at all.

"They don't very often come for lunch. You'll find more Asians at dinner-time."

"What a pity," I said. "You see it makes an enormous difference to the viewer whether I show them Asians and Europeans mixing happily together or whether I tell them: 'There are plenty of Asian members in this Club. They don't happen to be here just now but honestly, you must take my word for it.'"

While this argument was going on, two young Indian ladies came in. Both wore red saris; both had the Hindu religious sign on their foreheads; and both were exquisitely beautiful. The secretary introduced me to them—one name sounded to me like Mrs. Sakhrayana; the other lady was Miss Something. I asked permission to sit at their table and be filmed in their company. Mrs. Sakhrayana kindly agreed. We chatted while the cameras and reflectors were being fixed up and—let it be stated in all fairness—quite a few other Asians arrived in the meantime.

"But you are not English," said Mrs. Sakhrayana, noticing my foreign accent.

"No. I'm only British. I'm really Hungarian."

"So am I," said Mrs. Sakhrayana, the beautiful Asian member of the Kuala Lumpur Club in the red sari and with the Hindu sign on her forehead. "I come from Vienna. My maiden name is Heft."

George Mikes

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DISCUSSION

On Heidegger

MR. STUART HAMPSHIRE has discovered, in the course of reviewing my book on Martin Heidegger, that the badness of the man and of his philosophy are intimately connected. Excellent. That is, precisely, *one* of the points I wanted to make. Hence the quotations from Heidegger's most chauvinistic rhetoric—*"das Volk der Mitte," "das metaphysische Volk"*; hence the curt reference to Heidegger's Rektorat in '33; hence also my characterisation of him as "a dubious prophet," "a not quite honest seeker," "a lover of intellectual notoriety." But Mr. Hampshire is not satisfied with this: he is after bigger game. His discovery of Heidegger's two-fold badness, he says, is "not unconnected with the criticisms of contemporary British philosophy which are often to be found in ENCOUNTER and elsewhere." And he proceeds to suggest a dichotomy of two kinds of philosophy: on one side a particular type of analytical thinking; on the other, everything else. On one side we have "logic," a regard for "literal" or "testable" truth, and no affiliation with totalitarianism; on the other we have "speculation in a void," *no* regard for the requirement that a philosophy be true, and the likelihood of a fondness for Nazis or other totalitarian parties. This is a very unpalatable choice.

Take the first alternative first. I must say, parenthetically, that I object to the equation of "contemporary British philosophy" with Mr. Hampshire's sketch of the analytical school. I should think, for example, that Professor Hodges' Riddell Lectures, or E. L. Allen's *Existentialism from Within*, or even some of the "criticisms of contemporary British philosophy" Mr. Hampshire refers to, ought to be counted as part of contemporary British philosophy. Leaving that aside, however, can we agree on what this first (and favoured) alternative of Mr. Hampshire's is? It is hard, I have found from bitter experience, to get any one analytical philosopher to agree with any other as to what, and who, constitutes analytical philosophy. May I safely say that I am thinking of what seems to me the common denominator of the positions of Ryle and Russell? Or may I, despite their chronic disagreement, include Strawson and Quine? Or Professors Wisdom and Braithwaite? In any case, I should like to refer to this position, whoever *really* holds it, as scientific empiricism. It is certainly in the tradition of British empiricism, and it certainly considers philosophical truth to be of the same general kind as the particular truths of scientific hypotheses and theories. Now what is implied in maintaining such a position?

First, practically. It *is* true, so far as I know, that philosophers of this school in English-speaking countries have not on the whole associated with totalitarian parties (not at any rate since the Hitler-Stalin pact). Does this mean that an anti-totalitarian ethic flows from their philosophy? Certainly not. Lord Russell, in a recent interchange of letters in the *Observer*, has said explicitly that his philosophical position would put a dislike of merciless cruelty and a liking for oysters exactly on a par. He finds this irrefutable, yet altogether incredible. That is a candid and honourable admission. There is indeed a flat contradiction between scientific empiricism and any ethic other than mere "taste"; a world of "logic" and "literal truth" would be a world without moral values. The reason why British and American analytical philosophers are not much inclined to totalitarian company lies not at all in their philosophy, but in the point at which they *stop* philosophising. They stop short before traditional values of mercy and humanity, which are neither logical concepts nor testable truths, but standards to which, quite unanalytically, they feel they owe respect. Their feelings, in this case, are stronger than their philosophy, and I am glad they are; but that is no credit to the philosophy.

So much for practical implications. Within a safely theoretical area, what can the scientific empiricist accomplish? He makes statements, Mr. Hampshire says, which, if not exciting, have the merit of being true. What about? About physical objects? It's the business of physicists to make true statements about *them*. About plants and animals? It's the business of biologists. . . . And so on. When it comes to "testable truth," in the sense of empirical verifiability or falsifiability, the scientists, as everybody knows, have filled all the niches we philosophers used to occupy. If what we want is to increase the quantity of testable truth, we had better get out of philosophy and become scientists. The true statements we are left to make are not about things at all any more, but about what other people say about things—and even these statements, as statements of fact, are fast becoming the province of the psychologist or scientific linguist.

But then there is "logic." What help is there from it? Logic, logicians say, consists in framing

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formal systems very like those of mathematics. It is about, either nothing at all, or the most general and universal aspects of everything. "Analytical philosophers" often (ask Professor Quine) know very little about it, or if (like Professor Quine) they do, they happen to be analytical philosophers *and* logicians. No, there is no hope there. On the principles of the scientific empiricists, there is nothing for a philosopher to do but to retire, and a number of them, being honest and courageous people, have done just that. A very eminent Oxford don, for example, heard (so he tells the story) Professor Sheffer of Harvard remark that a philosopher can add to the store of human knowledge only in formal logic or psychology—i.e., *qua* philosopher, not at all; and reflecting, high above the Atlantic, on this adage, he resolved then and there to abandon philosophy in the strict sense for the more substantive field of the history of ideas. Scientific empiricism as such is a dead end. It can lead only to trivialities (the famous "analysis of ordinary usage") or out of philosophy altogether.

Are we, then, driven to "speculation in a void"? I think not. Let me argue this in two parts: first, as to Heidegger, second, as to the more general statement of Mr. Hampshire's dire alternative.

About Heidegger's ontology: again, I heartily agree. This is indeed empty and arrogant nonsense. This being so, and Heidegger's *curriculum vitae* smelling as bad as his cant of Being, why take him seriously? The reasons for my doing so, Mr. Hampshire suggests, apart from my alleged liking for vacuous speculation, are two: Heidegger's influence, and the appeal of his rhetoric about Dread and Nothingness. As to the first, this would make him at any rate of historical interest. But there is more to it. Heidegger has influenced not only bad men and bad philosophers, but good men and competent philosophers. And the reason for that is that the "rhetoric about Dread and Nothingness" has inside it a small hard core of truth, and of important truth. It is the truth common to the writings of Heidegger and Sartre—and the latter, whatever his shortcomings, was no Nazi. It is the truth, refined of its impurities, and assimilated to a vastly more humane and truer framework—but still acknowledged explicitly, as Heidegger's truth—that plays an essential part in the thought of the theologian Paul Tillich, who fled Nazi Germany and valiantly opposed Hitlerism in the name of Christian Socialism.

As to Mr. Hampshire's bird's-eye view of the history of philosophy; since he has so much respect for "history," I shall not take seriously his absurd misstatements, his misconception of Plato, for example, or his attempt to assimilate Spinoza to the upholders of empirically testable truth. (Up to now, one had the impression that Mr. Hampshire's interest in Spinoza was a sign of his having opened the common-room door in order to come out for air—now it seems he was only opening it the tiniest crack in order to entice Spinoza, or his emaciated ghost, inside.) But about the Hegelian tradition, that it was on the whole a bad thing—once more, I entirely agree. German professors have had, and still have, an unequalled licence to talk rubbish—just as Oxford dons have had, and still have, an unequalled licence to talk trivialities. All the same, if we really had our choice between "the nearness and shelter of Being" and "nothing can be both red and green all over," it would be a poor show. But no one is offering us Hegelianism (though there *are* rumours that it is cropping up in Oxford—that opening door lets in strange draughts), and we need not stick to the minutiae of "counterfactual conditionals" and what-not, either.

What other choice is there? Let me return for a moment to Sheffer's dictum. Again, I agree. No philosopher, by taking thought, can add a cubic centimeter to the volume of either factual or formal knowledge. The function of philosophy, in relation to knowledge, is not to increase its store, but to reflect critically on the knowledge we have, and on the fundamental beliefs which support it, and guide our search for it. Whitehead, the greatest British philosopher of the past half-century, defined philosophy as "the attempt to clarify those fundamental beliefs which finally determine the emphasis of attention that lies at the base of character." This is not, if you please, to abandon a concern for truth, or a respect for science and history, but rather to admit such concern and such respect as fundamental values, much as, in ethical reflection, we need to admit the ideals of mercy and humanity as fundamental values. Such standards—truth, consistency, humanity, or charity—are accessible neither to pure logic nor to empirical science, nor yet to empty speculation; they are embedded in the very texture of our lives as knowers and as doers. To trace them there, so that we may understand more clearly who and where we are, is the philosopher's task. With respect to the problem of knowledge, a British philosopher recently put this very well. Although the older *a priori* metaphysics is dead and gone, he tells us:

> *"We still want some general view of the scope of human knowledge, of its divisions into different types, and of its outer limits, as far as we can determine them now. And exploring the relations between these most general notions—existence, truth, identity, and so on—will provide us with the outlines of the map of human knowledge, and will show what the limits of knowledge are. But . . . we have to start on this explanation from the actual human situation which conditions all our thought and language, the situation, that is, of men observing and acting from a particular position in time and space, referring to particular things in their environment, identifying and classifying them, and trying to find ways to alter them."*

Well said, Mr. Hampshire! What, then, are we quarrelling about? Not about Heidegger, who makes me furious too. Not about Hegelianism, for which I have as little love as you do. But, I think, about the comfort or discomfort of this "actual human situation." For I believe that the existentialists' description of the human situation, twisted though it be, has yet a good deal in it. The human situation even in its knowing, let alone its doing, is acutely uncomfortable. Finitude, even in the context of knowledge, means not just the comfortable

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guesswork of Humean induction, but the passionate involvement of the person of the knower in the pursuit of a vision which may be altogether wrong. Every choice may be mistaken, and every choice that matters may be tragically mistaken. Responsibility, which is as indispensable to knowledge as to moral and political action, is—or runs the essential risk of being—a tragic gift. This is what the philosophers of Dread and Nothingness—however unsavoury the rhetoric of some of them—have to say to us. This, at any rate, is what they have said to me, and not to me alone.

Marjorie Grene

Mr. Hampshire replies

MRS. GRENE has missed the point. I argued that analytical philosophy belongs to the main Western tradition of philosophy, in one important respect, and that Hegel and Heidegger, who in part derives from Hegel, do not: analytical philosophers, like Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, and every other philosopher of this tradition, acknowledge standards of rationality and consistency in argument that are continuous with the standards of rationality acknowledged in mathematics and natural science. Their conclusions, like the conclusions of Spinoza and Leibniz, are intended to be testable by argument, and by argument that is valid and consistent according to canons of consistency that are not peculiar to philosophy. This is what the phrase "testable truth" meant. I did not mean that philosophy is science. For the rest I can only list the misstatements of fact in Mrs. Grene's letter, and indicate an error, as it seems to me, in a matter of opinion that is connected with them.

As regards facts:

(1) A clear account of analytical philosophy, with a full list of names and publications, can be found in Professor John Passmore's *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*. There is also Mr. J. O. Urmson's *Philosophical Analysis*.

(2) Russell has emphatically dissociated himself from both the methods of arguments and the conclusions of contemporary analytical philosophers. And his view of the status of moral propositions is not shared by most of these philosophers.

(3) No analytical philosopher believes "philosophical truth to be of the same general kind as the particular truths of scientific theories and hypotheses." On the contrary, they have been at pains to distinguish philosophical theories from scientific theories, and their way of establishing this distinction was the origin of the phrase "analytical philosophy": philosophy as analysis of concepts, and not as "scientific."

(4) I did not "assimilate Spinoza to the upholders of empirically tested truth." I said that he acknowledged the truths of natural science as truths, and any reading of his work and of his correspondence will show that this is so: not to mention the fact of his own scientific work. Of course he did not think that scientific knowledge is the only kind of knowledge, or even the highest kind. Nor did he think that philosophy is science. But he did think that philosophers had to establish their conclusions by logical argument, and that logic is sovereign in every domain of argument.

(5) "The minutiae of counterfactual conditionals," in Mrs. Grene's revealing phrase, have been a preoccupation of philosophers—and of Spinoza among them—for more than a thousand years, and of philosophers at Oxford more or less continuously (no doubt there were some slack periods) since that University was founded. Anyone who supposes that the problem of counterfactual conditionals is philosophically trivial does not know what philosophy is. The importance of this, as of the problem of necessary truths ("Nothing can be both green and red all over" is an example of a necessary truth involving undefined predicates), is still made plain to first year students, now as in the Middle Ages. And the Stoics, who were earnest men, are known to have talked about both these questions in their common-rooms.

On a matter of opinion, it seems to me doubtful whether the kind of philosopher (e.g., Whitehead) who is always announcing that he is concerned with the great, fundamental, human problems, is generally the man who in fact helps to solve them. This is often better done, step by careful step, by quiet methodical men who are not always speaking at the top of their voices.

I did not write, and do not believe, that the methods of analytical philosophers at the present time represent some final truth in philosophy: only that in their respect for argument and logic, they stand in the main tradition, from which Heidegger, with his infinite pretensions, is an aberration. He is not restrained in his ambitions by the common decencies of argument, as his Nazi patrons were not restrained in their ambitions by the common decencies of conduct. For the great man, inspired assertion is enough. Why these oracles of unreason are now so generally accepted at their own valuation, is a deeper, historical question to which I do not know the answer. I suggested that perhaps Nietzsche had the beginnings of an answer.

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LETTERS

"Britain's New Class"

THERE is always the danger with a magazine like ENCOUNTER that it may turn into a paper-backed anthology. One sees already at the head of some of your articles the words *With Acknowledgment To*. . . . This is to some extent inevitable; but a real magazine must, in the best sense of the word, be ephemeral, raise issues here and now. Mr. Frank Hilton's article in your February issue is precisely the sort of contribution which will keep ENCOUNTER alive.

I don't, however, agree with a word of it. To begin with, my hero, Joe Lampton, isn't at all nasty. He doesn't behave well; but whatever he does he does for money. He is poor and he wants to be moderately rich; if he had been moderately rich to begin with, there would have been no need for him to behave as he did. There is an Italian proverb, quoted in these pages some time ago, to the effect that tripe comes before morality. In short, if Joe had been the son and heir of a rich manufacturer, he could have afforded to be a thoroughly decent chap.

But Joe is neither violent nor ruthless. If Mr. Hilton had any idea of what goes on in business every day, he'd never use those adjectives. I have known of men who have served the same firm faithfully all their lives and who have been sacked in their fifties to make way for a cousin of the boss—or simply, at the other end of the scale, to save the firm a few pounds. That's what I call ruthless. And real violence to me means kicking a man to death for the fun of it. Joe merely defends himself when attacked.

Mr. Hilton's main fault is, of course, that he looks at the working classes through a haze of sentimentality. I might even be sentimental along with him if it weren't for the existence of the football pools. Their existence proves conclusively that the ambition of most working-class people is to be a *rentier* living at the Top on unearned income and to hell with social justice.

As for the New Men, they will be quite content with a little house, car, wife, TV, and a bottle of gin in the sideboard. And if they work hard enough they will get them. And what on earth is wrong with that? Only a tiny minority, thank God, ever wants power. In fact, Mr. Hilton's article is nothing but a very skilfully woven web of abstract ideas; not once can I find a referent, the solid reality to which every word should be attached.

Finally, I can't resist questioning the extraordinary statement of another of your contributors, Dr. Geoffrey Gorer, referring to the upbringing of babies in a Hindu community: "For at least the first year of its life [the baby] is indulged and satisfied to an extent which is unparalleled in any Western country." I'd like to know what else one can do with a child of that age. I'd like to know what else it can be but, as he puts it, King Baby. As the father of an eleven-month-old boy the details of how to discipline him without bringing down the N.S.P.C.C. upon me would be welcome.

JOHN BRAINE

Bingley
Yorkshire

"I Dreamed I Stopped Traffic"

MR. KRISTOL's review of *The Hidden Persuaders* seems to have touched something fundamental, to judge by the hysterical tone of your correspondence. I suspect that it is the feeling that modern advertising, by appealing to unconscious desires, reaches something heretofore hidden and protected in oneself; as if one's unconscious desires were not appealed to every day, every minute, by life, as it were, in the raw!

However, passing over that, there is, clearly, a special appeal made by the advertisers. Advertisements may, for convenience, be divided into three classes: those which try to inform you of something, like the small ads; those which try to make you notice something, like sky-writing; and those which try to make you want something. The first class is almost a public service; the second is a blot on the landscape, but is otherwise generally admitted to be harmless; it is only the third which is at issue here.

Assuming that all our scepticism about the effectiveness of advertising is swept away (and not one

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campaign in a thousand can be *shown* to be effective—it is simply the exceptions which are famous) there is still a great difference between advertising and, say, brain-washing. In the first, a man in the ordinary condition of life is bombarded with a great many conflicting demands on his desires and funds; in the second a man under extreme pressure is supplied with a single mental alternative to complete psychological dissolution. In the latter case we may reasonably say that a man is forced to believe something; in the former, surely, we would reply to the suggestion by asking: forced to believe what? Which of all these innumerable ego-satisfactions is he going to adopt? It is in fact the despair of the manufacturer and the delight of the agency that in any competitive industry all forms of advertising tend to cancel one another out. And it is of course true that, money being limited, all consumer industries are in a sense in competition with one another.

Furthermore, there is, and long has been, a kind of offensive-defensive arms race in progress between the advertiser and the consumer; the first time a device is used it strikes home; the next time, less so, and so on. We are already hardened to exaggerated claims, bright colours, pictures of pretty women; is it too much to believe that we shall become hardened to the eye-patch and the tattooed hand? . . .

If advertising appeals to unconscious desires, it can hardly be said to create them, for it could not appeal to them if they were not already there. If the hard-top appeals to a desire for safe sexual promiscuity, it may actually decrease the incidence of such promiscuity by satisfying the desire. To which the philosopher replies: how disgusting to be satisfied with a car. But to the psychologist it makes absolutely no difference, except that the car is likely to create fewer secondary problems than the mistress; and the term "unconscious desires" has no real meaning outside the framework of psychology.

It is extremely hard to see how advertising can affect us except by causing us to buy merchandise; that, at least, is its intention. And the possession of an object not dangerous or illegal cannot in itself pose moral problems; the most it can do is create economic problems, which, it seems to me, would best be solved by economic means—by a sane regulation of the economy, which would in itself make the wilder excesses of advertising unnecessary.

James M. Redfield

New College
Oxford

"The Un-Angry Young Men"

We are surrounded by disenchanted radicals, foregoing their pasts. The cult of political nostalgia has been revived as a literary genre. Dwight Macdonald leads the way, and Leslie Fiedler follows with a new twist of the screw—a rejection of radicalism disguised as a plea for radicalism! ("The Un-Angry Young Men," Encounter, January, 1958.)

Mr. Fiedler's theme is the conformity of America's younger generation, the absence of that vital non-conformism which distinguished his own early career. But his position is, to say the least, ambiguous. Convinced that radicalism is an outmoded moral posture, Mr. Fiedler is grateful to have escaped relatively unscathed. "Since what I wished for when I was young was maturity and an end to innocence, in short, middle-age itself, I thought I was playing it safe." . . . "First violence and despair, the flirtation with violence and the commitment to radical politics; then all the savour of slow disenchantment; and only at long last the acceptance of responsibility and accommodation—that was the pattern I imagined and approximately lived." Very well then: we expect the critical placing of his own experience in the light of maturity. Accommodation is here. Mr. Fiedler has savoured the end of his innocence—he has even written the book and made it a theory of American culture into the bargain. Yet here he is complaining—the young are not radical, they have earned a cheap maturity, "how banal our dissent from dissent without the living memory of a commitment to dissent" (that one is like joining the Communist Party in order to be eligible to write *The God That Failed!*). Instead of repeating Mr. Fiedler's mistakes, they have learned to conform at birth. And they are lousing up Mr. Fiedler's disenchantment. The pupil has been too apt, and Mr. Fiedler should know, for he has taught him himself.

Mr. Fiedler, it seems, must eat his radicalism *and* have it. The young should "go through it"—because he did: they should be stupid so that he may chastise them and set their feet again on the other-directed path. The assumption is that radicalism is permissible, even obligatory, as a therapeutic threshold to middle-age conformity, and that we should all go in for it in a big way—in order to "savour the slow disenchantment." What sort of primitive trench-warfare psychology of culture is this? It is a front for an impossible moral position. The article, which masquerades as a disinterested piece of sociological analysis, is really a piece of thinly-disguised personal pique.

Perhaps this accounts for Mr. Fiedler's fascination with violence, and the intolerable things his thesis leads him to say about it. He bewails the fact that the violence of the young is "non-functional, so theoretical," that "what looks like the beginning of civil war ends with an irate citizen getting his hand cut by a bayonet." Mr. Fiedler will forgive me if, as a Negro—albeit a colonial—I find the failure of the Little Rock Incident to develop into civil strife something of a relief: the baying of school-children and the distorted faces of the bigots was "functional" enough for me. "Most of the traditional motives for violence are gone," he says. Does he expect two boos for democracy? . . .

No doubt Mr. Fiedler is finished with humanism too—but he may well be right about America. Conformism is the ethic of the consumer society. Perhaps it is all that holds us together in the era of people's capitalism, what passes for a sense of community in the period of Eisenhower prosperity. In the age of mass democracy—if that is what it is—we are still, as Lindsay Anderson remarked recently,

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"between Arnold's two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born." And since we have chosen to consume rather than to govern, and are content to let the few, the powerful, and the remote shape our lives, perhaps the only decent thing to do is to "*maintain consumer standards*" *conforming* and *inclining* before the images of power. Perhaps. Is this what is happening in America?

But here Mr. Fiedler misleads us again. He is hoping to find quick allies by the manipulation of anti-American symbols, and hundreds no doubt have risen to the bait. In his haste to prove something, he grossly over-simplifies the complexities of American cultural life. For example, he takes account of Salinger's novel *Catcher In The Rye*, but tries to devalue it by marking it as "the creation of a man past thirty-five." Yet most of the Angry Young Men, offered here for contrast as the tough, wide boys with a future, on their way to "a controlling position in the culture" are in their thirties. Salinger is a "middle-aged *New Yorker* regular"—and Kingsley Amis, who is thirty-five, is a *Spectator* regular—and you can take your pick. On any other subject Mr. Fiedler would have felt obliged, as a critic, to reckon not merely in consumer/producer terms, but in terms of literary quality and human values—for instance the spontaneity and humanity, the sensitivity of the idiom, in *Catcher In The Rye* compared, say, with the insensitive, embattled philistinism of *I Like It Here*. So that, even if we accept his thesis, we find ourselves questioning his particular judgments and characterisations. Is the *Partisan Review*—which far surpasses the *London Magazine* in interest and quality—as bad as is made out, or is it that the Editors are not sufficiently penitent for their past? Does *Dissent* really represent "nostalgia at the point where it fades into academism"—(for example, the Autumn issue with the studies of Subtopia and Norman Mailer's brilliant essay on "The White Negro")? In spite of what is said, the sense we have at the end of *On The Waterfront* or *End As A Man* or *The Kidders* or *A Man Is Ten Feet Tall* is the strange conjunction of humanism and suppressed violence, and nothing Mr. Fiedler says helps us to account for these representative offerings of a "conformist" culture. Are *The Hidden Persuaders* and *The Organization Man* cultural sports—particularly if we read them after *A Face In The Crowd* or *Executive Suite*? Perhaps Mr. Fiedler has lost his sense of what cultural radicalism and dissent actually looks and feels like, even when it functions within conformism. . . .

STUART M. HALL

Universities and Left Review
London, S.W.4

As A compatriot of Mr. Fiedler's and a member of his generation, I must say that the general tone and some of the material of his "The Un-Angry Young Men" in the January issue sounded to me pretty silly. That bureaucracy driven half-mad by proliferating money? Oh, let's get off it! We're not *half* so rich. Has he ever worked in a tax collector's office? Has he noticed the cracks opening in downtown sidewalks and broken pavements in some of the big cities lately? Has he ever made up a budget or a balance-sheet for home, corporation, or country? After all, there's a big, bad world still whirling around outside the groves of academe, (Although I've not noticed that my young brother, who is inside them, is getting rich either. But—Mr. Fiedler was certainly right on *that* score—his demands of life are modest and he doesn't expect to.) Has he ever worked in small business, and I don't mean one with five thousand employees, either, but small, small, where the owner is his own production manager, his own idea man, salesman, chemist, artist, and some of the time his own book-keeper, signing payroll cheques with one hand, on the phone with the other, with one eye on the clock and the other off in the distance on one more dream, just one more? Well, I know a few such, and they would be glad to have somebody's word for it that failure is becoming "increasingly difficult," "perhaps impossible." Has Mr. Fiedler looked at the failure lists of small business recently or noticed doors closing in his own neighbourhood?

And all that social peace as compared to the '20's and '30's. I know Mr. Fiedler hasn't spent all his life in the State of Montana but I wouldn't if I hadn't know it previously. Certainly his airy shrug-off of the Southern torment doesn't sound as if he has walked under the magnolias lately.

EVELYN HOUSTON

Alhambra, California

MR. FIEDLER, as a literary critic of some abilities, ought to know that what purports to be a description can also be a manifestation of objective fact, itself worthy of note and comment. That is why his article on America's Post-War Generation angered me so. Perhaps everything he said was true, but the viciousness and contempt with which he relegated scores of intelligent human beings and masses of hard work each to their various epigrams casts a highly malodorous aura about the observer himself. If the crime of the critics and the sociologists is to treat of life and people as if they were dead things, yet the angry Mr. Fiedler should not treat them in exactly the same way; and if between American teacher and pupil there is a vicious circle of imitation, Mr. Fiedler's contribution is its latest arc.

CHARLES FRIED

Wadham College
Oxford

PROFESSOR FIEDLER'S lively and highly-coloured account of the post-war American generation (ENCOUNTER, January) has provoked me, as a bona fide member, to suggest a few amendments to bring his version a little closer to the experience that I and many of my friends lived through.

First, the boundaries of this generation should be marked a little more precisely. One of them, as

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Professor Fiedler points out, is that these were the men who were young enough to have missed really fighting in World War II; and the other is that they are old enough to have experienced the Korean War either directly or indirectly.... This generation did enjoy peace, almost five years to the day. The violent sputterings of the world in the late 'forties seemed like the dying sparks of the great fire that had been World War II, that we, thank God, had been young enough to miss. Then the bomb exploded, slowly, in the summer and fall of 1950. Then we understood that we were not the "post-war" generation but only another war one, of an especially nasty sort; wars end but what about "police actions"? ...

With the war came that numbing quality that has infected American life ever since. America, shaken and troubled by having to fight another war only five years after the greatest military effort in its history, was collectively uncertain where the line between heresy and treason lay. This feeling paralysed the liberals, abetted the witch-hunters, and confused the majority in between. We were too young to be "guilty" but old enough to be suffocated. Even now the air is only beginning to stir. Should we have raised our voices when the whole nation held its breath? Instead we did what they did: enjoyed the euphoria of ever-increasing salaries and standards of living.

Have we not known violence? The strikes and lynchings have died down a bit but external violence, the procession of wars and revolutions, has permeated the air and has laid hands on our generation for as long as any of us can remember.

May I say then that the "generations are (*not*) what the books are about." Why define our relationship to the generation of the 'thirties? Its harshness and bitterness we can do without; its crude theories of the nature of politics and society taught us much. Although outworn we still use them, a perhaps more tragic than comic situation. Much more important is our relationship to the turbulent world outside of America which we are the first generation to have to face as a lifetime problem. America's young men are not "un-angry," they are numb.

EDGAR J. GORDON

Paris

IT WAS extremely interesting to read Professor Leslie A. Fiedler's sad and brilliant account of how young American writers have nothing to write about. "Poets," he finishes unhappily, "all technique and no theme; novelists desperately contriving factitious subjects because they need somehow to keep writing books."

The situation may be as Professor Fiedler describes: he would know. But the causes he suggests baffle and astonish me. Basically, he says, the young writers are a generation but not A Generation. They have no indignation because there is nothing to be indignant about. Whenever they try to make a gesture of fierce independence, like going and living in Paris, Foundations vie with each other to give them huge subsidies. They can't seem to help getting money and fat Establishment jobs. Professor Fiedler's generation has robbed his son's generation of the possibility of revolt. So they become academic critics; conformists; bores. Whereas, in happy contrast, the writers now forty felt themselves rebels in those great days before the war: "We felt at least the *need* to pretend, to invest our aggression in a sanctioned cause." Whereas too, in equally happy contrast, the Angry Young Men of England, being lower-class and not liking Her Majesty, have grounds for a collective resentment which gives them masses of copy for their novels and plays and poems.

When a writer starts writing (however professionally Pinfold he may later become) he does so, presumably, because he thinks he has something in his head which the world ought to hear about. This may, indeed, be his indignation with some aspect of the state of things. It may even, as in the case of Mr. Osborne, be his indignation with nearly every aspect of the state of things. It may also be his delight with the world, his discovery of love, his perception of natural beauty, his sense of the power of religion, or any other affirmative feeling. And if indignation, it may profitably be personal and local—indignation with his father or his schoolmaster or his own weaknesses. Jim Dixon is annoyed with intellectual *poseurs*, as have been Molière and Thackeray. Atwater is annoyed with a girl who refuses to go to bed with him, as have been Catullus and Andrew Marvell and I.

Anger with the Prime Minister's moustache, sympathy with breadlines or Spanish Republicans: such emotions may cause the formation of militant groups whose members hold meetings and enlist in foreign armies; and a young writer who gets involved in this sort of thing comes by his subject-matter with enviable ease. What about a young writer who has an affair, goes for a walk in the snow, or drinks a vodka martini for the first time? His subjects may not be given to him quite so ready-made, and his readers may not recognise their justice quite so comfortably: but at least they are apt to be *his* subjects. He will be trying to originate a telephone call to the world, callow though the world may find it, instead of taking calls from the angry group or self-conscious generation to which he belongs, and passing them straight back to subscribers who happily recognise them. Young American poets (living as they do in this fabulous world) have "no theme": would they be more worth reading if another Depression gave them a theme? Young American novelists (meeting as they must all the dotty people who walk about in the streets) have to go "contriving factitious subjects": would their books be more real, more immediate, if a lynching at Little Rock had given them an authentic real-life subject?

It would be impertinent, as well as impossible, for me to try to guess why (if Professor Fiedler is right) young Americans are dull. But I just do not believe it has anything to do with the New Deal being a dead issue.

ROGER LONGRIGG

London, W.9

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As part of the "new" generation (being 23), I find Leslie Fiedler's article (Encounter, January 1958) addressed to me. He complains that the young do not attack their elders, except in the negative sense of asking to be left alone. This bothers Fiedler; very well, then, I shall give him what he wants.

Mr. Fiedler is the one with problems, not the new generation; Mr. Fiedler is a frustrated man. And it is frustrating to finally realise that the ideals for which you and your generation fought had scant basis in reality. The glorious socialism Fiedler probably sought is now realised to be not only non-existent, but a worse nightmare than the *status quo*. The romanticism of poverty—of the poet starving for art, drinking Pernod—is revealed as as much of a posture, a sham, as the bourgeois world he shuns. And it is very gay to classify one's former opinions as being those of youth—violent, irresponsible—but isn't a man *always* responsible for himself, and if ideas have power, then certainly for his ideas as well? Fiedler's generation has never admitted their responsibility for the natural, logical results of their ideas; worse still, they never contemplate them. They are blithely dismissed as the product of Youth. (Dwight Macdonald is another irresponsible in this sense.)

According to Fiedler, prosperity has been bad for the intellectual, and by inference, for America. Tolerance has also been bad. The easing of social cleavages has been bad. I'd like to know what would be good. Better yet, why does Fiedler seem so dismayed at all these lessenings of social tension and injustice? Can it be that they deny him sources of revolt and dissatisfaction? Parenthetically, I fail to understand his infatuation, his idealisation of violence.

Perhaps to-day's young intellectuals here in America see all this. Perhaps we try to have constructive attitudes towards society, to see what is good, what can be changed for the better, and more important (as opposed to Mr. F.), what change can only result in worse evil. We do not pin our neuroses on our sleeves, seize on any possible source of miscontent, and balloon it up into a movement of revolt. We have stopped insisting on Utopias. Why should we create our own radicalism if we see the futility, the distortion of past radicalisms? This is what frustrates Mr. Fiedler: we find his sort of youth obsolete.

Carol Walter

Evanston, Illinois

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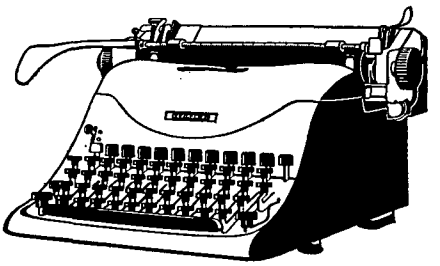

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BOOKS

The Communist Reformation

LEFT- AND RIGHT-WING Communists differ very strikingly. It is no accident that Nagy's testament* is a privately-circulated practical memorandum about the situation of Hungary in 1955, a sort of opposition state paper; while Djilas' testament (*The New Class*) is a theoretical book, hardly more about Yugoslavia than any other country. If Nagy has general views they emerge only *en marge*, and are not made into a coherent system; nor could they be—and in this he shows himself a bad Marxist. His book is hardly for the general reader. Indeed it is not a book but a document (why then is so ill-arranged and important a piece of historical evidence produced without an index?). Nagy, then, is an Englishman among Communists, he starts from what ought to be done here and now and adumbrates a few theoretical propositions in which he is patently uninterested. Whereas if Djilas has particular views they emerge purely as illustrations of his intellectual system, and we constantly feel his grasp of practical affairs is weak—he is a Frenchman among Communists.

Yet they both want the same things. Sovereignty for the satellites: Nagy because he wants to make Communism popular to his people and is himself a Hungarian patriot, Djilas because self-determination is a good abstract principle. The de-collectivisation of agriculture: Nagy because he knows the peasants and wants to feed the towns, Djilas because it is democratic and other "socialist" forms of agriculture can be thought of. Consumer goods before capital goods, more freedom of speech, less power to the security police: these three things both want on the same self-evident grounds.

Indeed what is the difference between left and right any more? Nationalisation, perhaps, of industry: but the right would not de-nationalise anything in a country already long Communist. Workers' control, surely: here is a left-wing, futurist institution that assumes workers to be quite different from what they are. The right would prefer trade unions and collective bargaining. But in fact the right, where it is in power, cannot wholly resist the workers' demand for control (Poland), and the left cannot allow it full rein lest the workers throw it out (Yugoslavia). In a word, we can imagine circumstances in which Djilas and Nagy would take different lines, but the present and likely circumstances in any Communist country are not among them. "Left" and "right" refer to historical origins in a period when they did have meaning, and above all to the distinction between the dogmatic, futuristic, academic temper and the empirical, cautious, practical temper.

Yet even this implies too much difference. Was not Bukharin and is not Lukacs "right" wing? Yet Communism has produced no greater theoreticians. And if it is difficult to produce examples of the empirical temper on the left, it is certainly possible to point to more than one kind of theory: Djilas is not Trotsky. Left and right undoubtedly do differ on the whole as indicated, but they are united by much more important things: humanity, decency, consistency, a regard for truth and (at any rate inside the party) freedom. The true progression is not from left to right any more, but from one hundred per cent to nil per cent Stalinism. If at one end of this scale Mao differs from Khrushchev in various ways, so may Djilas differ from Nagy at the other.

Why, then, didn't they win? If left and right agree, how can the centre hold out? Why do things in fact remain so different, even in Poland and Yugoslavia? What has the centre got that the wings have not? The answer is depressingly simple: an eye for the realities of power. We shall lose power if we relax: this is the message of Lenin and Stalin to their heirs; this is what

* IMRE NAGY ON COMMUNISM, with a foreword by Hugh Seton-Watson. *Thames & Hudson.* 30s.

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Khrushchev has learned since his secret speech, and Mao since his Hundred Flowers; this is what Djilas and Hungary have taught Tito, and *Po Prostu* has taught Gomulka. Hang together or hang separately; hence the partial reversion to the Stalinist norm of both the latter men this autumn, and the reversion of Mao and Khrushchev at an earlier date. In every Communist country the party is the prisoner of the same appalling dilemma: its monopoly of power is the first condition of "socialism" as it understands the word, but most of its subjects do not want socialism on those terms. And this is the dilemma that Nagy and Djilas at first would not face: though each in the end realised its logic and chose the people's will rather than "socialism"—Nagy in his second premiership, Djilas in his book. Their choice is what distinguishes these two men from all the rest.

The work of Nagy that lies before us comes from the time when he had not yet to face this dilemma. He shows no fear at all that his relaxation policy would lose the party power. On the contrary, still the prisoner of the party's fundamental assumptions, he assumes it is basically popular and would only be strengthened by reform. He is certainly not yet prepared to share power with other forces. But except within very narrow limits—the limits, say, of the improvements Khrushchev has wrought over Stalin—reform merely weakens the party. Take a very small, very obvious improvement: we suppress the double pricing of fertilisers and therefore the black market in fertilisers. Then why should any peasant join the party, or any party member settle in the countryside? Where is the money in it any more, if one can't re-sell fertilisers on the quiet? Why live in a village and be hated when you aren't even paid for it? The double pricing of fertilisers is an essential prop of the régime. Or again, send round a circular to schools hinting that the Russians didn't invent the umbrella after all. But the teacher has already said they did: the party now stands convicted of fallibility, subservience, Russification, and weakness of purpose. Its reform will not make it loved: too much blood has flowed under bridges. Not even the Polish party is loved: Gomulka too has "slain his tens of thousands."

But if there is nothing on this basic matter in Nagy's Testament, it contains much else of the highest interest. The short chapters cover every aspect of Hungarian life in 1955, from literature to agriculture; and refer to countless details of recent Hungarian history. In form an apologia for the author's first premiership and an attack on Rakosi's reversal of his policies, the tract appeals to previous Central Committee resolutions and to Lenin; naturally only to those resolutions and passages that support him. These

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are accorded, in the normal Communist manner, the mystical status others give to Creeds worked out at (selected) Œcumenical Councils.

Not an intellectual innovator, not a master of the pungent phrase, indeed hardly an intellectual or a liberal at all, Nagy cuts here the figure of a working politician. And—wonder of wonders—arising from the middle levels of the apparat, with the load of a long stay in Moscow on his shoulders, he is brave, sensible, kind, and honest. His character is his originality, and his most significant chapter is that on "Ethics and Morals in Hungarian Public Life," where he emphasises, as Djilas also did, the character-destroying nature of Communist party life.

This good man now lies in prison. The "gale of the world" has blown away that ideal of a reformed Communism for which he fought in this book, and since then he has made himself guilty of still greater "treason". As the telegrams fly, signed by Western intellectuals in favour of this or that Hungarian writer, should we not spare a mention for this dull little man, this ordinary Communist *apparatchik*, who did not fail his people when they called on him, but bore the responsibility for their rashness and our torpor? The eleventh-hour leader of his nation, the symbol of what they stood for, the plaything of history, he is indeed Hungary's Man from Missouri. He has deserved better of us than that we should forget him.

Peter Wiles

A Literary Essay

Principles and Persuasions: The Literary Essays of Anthony West. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 21s.

Portraits in Satire. By KENNETH HOPKINS. *Barrie.* 21s.

MR. WEST is self-confessedly a critical buccaneer:

There is a good deal of negative criticism in these essays, but I am not at all apologetic about that.... The main function of literature is to teach a knowledge of life. If it is to do that it must be contributed to by writers of integrity concerned to give a truthful interpretation of their experience.... The extent to which a writer will evade the realities of his relationships, and fudge and dodge facts in presenting himself to the world, gives one a good measure of his integrity. The falsifications he indulges in while fabricating the persona he presents for public consumption generally show up in his books as falsities, and if one is aware of the deliberate or compulsive distortions that shape his life one is the better equipped to judge by how much his work is a contribution to knowledge, and by how much it is a simple reflection of his psychological necessities.

Well enough. No one, except the Churchier sort of critic, but is not a little the better pleased for seeing a fine angry gentleman making mincemeat of the Aunt Sallies, even if a few of the little wooden balls go wide. One can always do with another debunk, especially if undertaken, not with the Lyttonian generalised impish sneer, but in the spirit of awarding debunk where debunk is due, and credit where credit. The trouble is, of course, that in this last matter the reader may not share Mr. West's *Principles and Persuasions*. Speaking purely for myself, I am prepared to cheer and laugh loudly as I see the exposure of Orwell as an arrested adolescent, of Mauriac as a psychopathic misogynist, of Hugh Walpole as ... well, as Hugh Walpole. I am gratified by a brief study of G. B. S. that begins:

Any biography of George Bernard Shaw stands or falls on the question of which Shaw it is mainly about. Two are available. There is the great playwright, and there is the blitherer who wrote the prefaces....

On the positive side I am eminently pleased to see those two admirable intellects and equally admirable men, Charles Darwin and T. H. Huxley, defended (more than ably) against the laughably misplaced patronising of an off-the-hook-Freudian American biographer. All the same, the cheers and laughter are both a little uneasy: one is aware, in fact, that some of the missiles have not quite connected, that some of the satire is uncomprehending or unfeeling rather than just retribution, and that one is approving the intention of the debunker, the fact that he has chosen his target advisedly, rather than the total efficiency of his execution.

And when one is *not* on his side, naturally enough the reaction is one of thorough disapproval. The essay on Miss Compton-Burnett seems to me a sorry and childish performance: nothing that Mr. West says of her is precisely untrue, but it is quite beside any possible valid critical point and serves only to show, not any inadequacy in the authoress, but simply a peculiarly naïve misapprehension of her essential quality by the critic. The essay on George Eliot, too, is very much less wounding than its creator imagines. It is true that certain facets of the character of Mary Ann Evans (as distinct from "George Eliot") are notably unappealing: and one might even be prepared to agree (with certain rather important ifs and ands) that

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It is . . . simply grotesque to treat George Eliot's work as the disinterested product of a morally healthy personality and as a valid interpretation of the life of the time; but as a creation of the psychological necessities of an essentially second-rate mind driven by ruthless egotism it is of the greatest interest.

But to proceed from this admittal to the conclusion that it is

totally destructive to George Eliot's pretensions to be a creative artist, or even a serious thinker

is a very different matter. Mr. West's hard and sharp dichotomy of literature into (a) contribution to knowledge of life, (b) simple reflection of an author's psychological necessities, is simply not a viable one. These are not separable and the one may well be also the other. Mary Ann Evans may be "morally unhealthy," but the human spirit can transcend its frailties in strange ways, and the George Eliot brought into being by the "psychological necessities" of morally unhealthy Mary Ann Evans may be as a lily growing upon mud. It is not only those who may be thought to have "succeeded" with regard to life who are capable of contributing to the world's knowledge of it. The shifty and the defeated have also their information.

For the rest, Mr. West is a generous and impulsive writer with whom it is impossible to be seriously cross, or to remain cross even unseriously for long. Whatever he writes, he is stimulating, and that is the battle half-won. If I do detect a single false note, it is a certain incipient pompousness. *Principles and Persuasions* is sub-titled *The Literary Essays* of A. W. Is this then his total *œuvre*, complete, definitive, and authenticated? And "literary essays," indeed! These are reprinted "pieces" from the excellent *New Yorker*, no more and no less. Even the higher journalism does itself no good by pretending to be what it is not.

Mr. Kenneth Hopkins is an avid and companionable searcher of literary by-ways. *The Poets Laureate* was a small classic of its sort. In *Portraits in Satire* he turns his attention to what he calls the "Silver Age" of English verse satire:

The Golden Age begins with Butler, reaches its perfection in Dryden, and closes with the death of Pope. The Silver Age begins properly with Churchill, a figure in stature only slightly below that of Pope, and closes with the undoubted decline observable in the satires of Gifford and Mathias. In the succeeding Bronze Age only Byron (a poet splendidly gifted, but too peevish to be a truly great satirist) remains a figure of first importance. . . .

JONATHAN CAPE

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RONALD FRASER

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The reader may feel that the value-judgments in this preliminary announcement are too cock-eyed to merit the author much further notice. I myself have a great softness for Churchill but I would not pretend that his stature was much above that of Pope's toe. And of Byron I would lawyerly argue that (a) I altogether deny his peevishness (*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* excepted), and (b), admitting his peevishness, I altogether deny that peevishness is inimical to satire and would further state that Pope, the greatest satirist, was also the peevishest bar none. But a little further perusal will convince the peruser that this is no more than a over-generous partiality on Mr. Hopkins' part for his chosen subjects; and a little reflection, that without such a partiality no man could be expected to venture down so tangled and time-brambled a path. I am happy to report in addition that *Portraits in Satire* is a genuine contribution to knowledge of life, as well as a simple reflection of Mr. Hopkins' psychological necessities.

You have been reading, dear reader, a Literary Essay of

Hilary Corke

Five Novels

Julio Jurenito. By ILYA EHRENBURG. *MacGibbon & Kee.* 18s.

After the Rain. By JOHN BOWEN. *Faber.* 15s.

Nothing But the Night. By JAMES YAFFE. *Cape.* 18s.

Two by Two. By MARTHA GELLHORN. *Longmans.* 16s.

Ways of Sunlight. By SAMUEL SELVON. *MacGibbon & Kee.* 15s.

EHRENBURG'S novel *Julio Jurenito*, first published in Russia in 1922, now first appearing in English, with an almost total lack of documentation, is something of a mystery. It is hard to believe that any possible Russian thaw can have authorised this English version. However, the politics are not my affair, and since I am not equipped to speculate on what Ehrenburg might have become if he had not elected to return to the fold, or to moralise on the harm he has suffered from toeing the party line, it only remains to discuss the book. We learn from the flyleaf that "it has come to be regarded by the critics as Ehrenburg's masterpiece," but who or where the critics are, we are not told. I should find difficulty in regarding it as anyone's masterpiece. It is a sort of *roman philosophique* in the *Candide* tradition, a picaresque satire covering the years just before the First World War, the war itself, the Russian revolution and its immediate aftermath. Julio Jurenito is a teacher, a prophet of nihilism and destruction who gathers around him a band of disciples. Ehrenburg himself appears in the book as one of them, to whom is delegated the job of writing the master's life; others include an American evangelist entrepreneur; a German with a lust for regimentation who attaches himself impartially to any side where his passion can be gratified; a Russian who parodies a Dostoevsky character; and a simple savage. In the usual picaresque vein the novel wanders all over Europe; the teacher and his followers suffer a bewildering variety of adventures and misadventures, finishing up in Russia of the revolutionary years. It is in these last pages that the observation and the satire are at their sharpest.

This kind of fiction has its own conventions. We expect a certain formlessness, rapid movement, characters who are types—representatives of ideas rather than human beings; and so far *Julio Jurenito* runs true to form. But it has some damaging inadequacies. First, there are far too many incidents, and they are not sufficiently developed. The shifts are so rapid that no one situation has time to make its full effect. Second, and far more serious, is the banality of the ideas. This kind of puppet-show ought to give us perpetual shocks of paradoxical surprise. All we learn here is that big business is rapacious, that war is cruel, that revolution leaves things in a worse mess than they were before, that the pigs are as bad as the humans. It needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave to tell us this. It may be surprising to find a Communist writer impartially satirising both sides, but this is an accidental and external surprise. As a matter of fact, the incidents all fall slightly flat because they have nowhere to fall from; the author has no point of view. You can say if you like that he is a nihilist—a vaguely humane nihilist. But this does not really help. Satire needs a firmer standing-ground and nihilism needs more spiritual energy than this book displays. But if it is no masterpiece it is at least a curiosity. It displays a new variant of the eternal Russian intellectual's situation; the umbilical cord tying him to the motherland, pulling against the attractions of the glittering West; symbolised here—and this is the strongest and most permanent emotion recorded in the book—by an ever-recurring nostalgia for the cafés of the Left Bank.

After the Rain is also satire, this time in the guise of science fiction. A bogus rain-maker accidentally succeeds in making rain, and since no one knows how to stop it the world suffers a new deluge. This introduction is a somewhat

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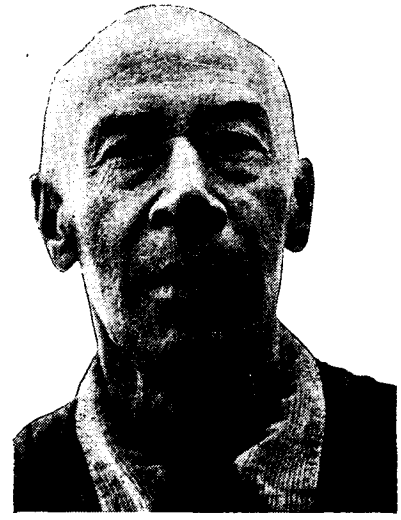
perfunctory joke, but the progress of the flood is not. Cold, wet, scarcities, social disruptions, evacuations, are vividly described. But the real point of the book is in following the fortunes of a small group of people, apparently the sole survivors of the catastrophe, who find themselves together on a raft that has been lavishly equipped as an advertising stunt for a patent breakfast food. The thought of living on any patent breakfast food is in itself a fantastic twist of horror, and Mr. Bowen shows himself extremely fertile in such bizarre and gruesome inventions. He pursues with considerable originality the old theme of the ill-assorted small group in ghastly circumstances. None of the characters is from stock, and the varying relations of the hero and his girl-friend in the enforced gregariousness of the raft are particularly well handled. Then a weightier theme begins to develop. The acknowledged leader of the party is Arthur, a thin, precise, nagging little accountant. At first he is leader simply by virtue of knowing the right thing to do. Gradually he comes to exercise a more sinister hypnotic power over everyone, and eventually, though I will not reveal how, develops into one of the terrifying Big Brother figures who are now among our accustomed fictional companions. However, Mr. Bowen is not an Orwell; the flood goes down, and so in the end does Arthur. The usual fault in such satiric-didactic fables is a thinness of detail and incident. *After the Rain* triumphantly surmounts this difficulty; Mr. Bowen has real imaginative and inventive power. But his theme is a big one, and it is perhaps not unfair to say that the treatment is not quite up to the weight. What begins by being comparatively light-hearted fantasy ends by taking on a heavier task; and the ultimate terrors are not quite adequately realised.

In *Nothing But the Night* Mr. Yaffe takes the notorious Loeb-Leopold murder case of the twenties and hashes it up again in a contemporary setting, and in New York instead of Chicago. It seems a singularly pointless enterprise. The appalling story of the two degenerate youths who murdered a child to see what it felt like is well enough known already, and to go through it all in a vein of soggy plodding social realism adds nothing to understanding and makes no imaginative impression whatever. All the clichés of newspaper psychology—about parental inadequacy, suppressed homosexuality, and all the rest of it—are dragged out; whether for our approval or not never becomes clear. Indeed no guiding principle or motive ever becomes clear. The horror of the situation never impresses itself upon us, apparently because it is never felt. The setting and the sequence of events are all painstakingly worked out, and plausibly enough; but the failure to realise the situation in



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HEINEMANN

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human terms is almost frightening. After the crime the mother of one of the youths visits him in prison, where of course he is under a capital charge; we are told that after these visits she always becomes "tense and irritable." This is a fair sample of how deep the book manages to go in realising the emotional implications of the position. Would one have expected her to be comfortably relaxed? Discussed in these terms any human experience becomes mechanically meaningless.

In *Two by Two* Martha Gellhorn tells four stories, each centred on a phrase from the marriage service—for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part. The first is by far the most impressive. It tells of an American girl during the last war, married to a young Italian noble, cooped up with him and his moribund family in an immense castle, waiting for the arrival of the liberation forces. Andrea, the husband, is tied to his family and the estate, but he has nothing to do. The couple are devoted to each other, but he hates his inactivity, and gradually their life becomes more and more devoid of content. On the arrival of the Americans Andrea gets a job as interpreter with the mopping-up forces. He becomes transformed, rejuvenated, full of vitality and eagerness. All his old passivity disappears, and he plans to leave the estate and start a new life in Montana after the war. She realises that she has become accustomed to their old Italian life, fears the change, but prepares herself for the prospect for his sake. Then the war ends; the excitement of the liberation period dies down. Just as she has become eager to see the new Andrea start a new life he slips back into his old ways. The estate and the family resume their control. She realises that he will never change. "It is really not so bad, she thought, and saw, clearly, the small salon in the tower where the old Princess sat, doing needlework in the afternoons; it is not so bad, it is all we have known, and we need never speak of it again." A beautiful peripeteia, not only formally neat, but completely related to the characters and the circumstances. All these stories are told with great economy, directness, and humanity; their varied settings are all exquisitely presented; but the others are a shade nearer to the conventional novelist's situations. The second is about the cold-hearted, ambitious, political wife, and the atmosphere of house-party intrigue is surely a little anachronistic, even for the phase of post-war England in which we now are. The remaining stories, of a man tied to an invalid wife, a woman hopelessly fascinated by a dashing, peripatetic international press photographer, are again admirably done; but there is a slight uneasy sense of having met the situations too often before. The treatment is so just, direct, and sympathetic that the least whiff of magazine-story factitiousness in the plots seems out of place.

Samuel Selvon's second book, *Ways of Sunlight*, is again a series of sketches of West Indian life, sometimes in the Carribean, sometimes in London. The characters and situations have not yet become stereotyped, and the handling of the idiom is extremely fresh and lively. The element of reporting in fiction is a perfectly legitimate one, and here we have perfectly sincere and genuine reports of a life that is still unfamiliar. But if this vein is to continue it will probably need a rather more robust framework behind it. There is not the smallest suspicion of magazine-story factitiousness in these sketches; but many of them are rather slight. Mr. Selvon has a considerable talent for sympathetic, undistorted observation, and for finding the right language to express it in. What he needs now is a larger motive and a stronger plot-structure.

Graham Hough

Half-way to Greatness

Words For the Wind. By THEODORE ROETHKE. *Secker & Warburg.* 15s.

MR. ROETHKE is an *enjoyable* poet. You can read his poems, not as a dreary duty which might in some way do your soul good, but actually for fun. There are not many contemporary poets of whom any such thing can be said, so let us say it of Mr. Roethke at once, and go on saying it until we attract to his poems some members of what Mr. Philip Larkin calls "the pleasure-seeking audience . . . the only audience worth having, for which the dutiful mob that signs on every September is no substitute."

BUT. Of course when a reviewer begins with that kind of praise, there is always a *but*. And, my space being short, the rest of it will have to be given to complaining.

Briefly, the trouble is that Mr. Roethke has all the attributes of a major poet except the one that really matters. He has verve, technique, a teeming imagination, verbal curiosity, the whole equipment. All he lacks is the one thing that can give major status to a poet: an unmistakeable identity. All the important poets have it in common that the reader can feel behind their poems a tangible presence, an individual character that could never be mistaken for anyone else's. The chief technical means by which this informing identity makes itself felt is, usually, rhythmic. As (I think it was) I. A.

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Richards once remarked, the poet who has not a personal rhythm has simply not got into the game, not begun to exist as a poet. But of course the chief ways in which this essential individuality comes through are not technical ways at all.

Mr. Roethke, as they used to say of Wordsworth, has Two Voices. The poems he has written in, at any rate, the last ten years, divide very easily into two groups. First, poems that are 'fanciful', in both the good and the bad sense. These poems are usually (though not always) rather long, and they represent the sheer fertility of Mr. Roethke's mind, being in rapid succession gay, bleak, grotesque, plain, comic, and whimsical. The trouble is that the fertility is not actually engaged in fertilising anything.

Mouse, mouse, come out of your ferns,
And small mouths, stay your aimless cheepings:
A lapful of apples sleeps in this grass.
That anguish of concreteness!—
The sun playing on loam,
And the first dust of spring listing over back-lots—
I proclaim once more a condition of joy.
Walk into the wind, willie!

Mr. Roethke, having once started in this fashion, can go on indefinitely; or, to be blunt, interminably. He strikes out, in the process, many a quaintly attractive phrase, many a line that anchors itself in the memory (in short, as I said to start with, it's *fun*), but he seems to have no idea how to organise his poetry into a poem.

The other Voice is, simply, a ventriloquial one. As if realising that his elfin manner doesn't cover all he wants to say, Mr. Roethke goes from time to time into an imitation of Yeats.

Did each become the other in that play?
She laughed me out, and then she laughed me in;
In the deep middle of ourselves we lay;
When glory failed, we danced upon a pin.
The valley rocked beneath the granite hill;
Our souls looked forth, and the great day stood still.

There is nothing to be said about these Yeatsian poems; they are, for those of us who love Yeats, both pleasurable and painful, like hearing a favourite tune played at the wrong time. They, too, contain lines that one will remember, perhaps for ever. (Examples: "The links were soft between us; still, we kissed"; "I swear she cast a shadow white as stone.")

In a word, Mr. Roethke's problem is that of all artists and all men. It is 'to find himself', as we say. And the more there is to find, the longer it takes. That the struggle is so evident in his work, that it is not cunningly camouflaged or snowed over by verbiage, is already evidence of his strength. And if what I have written sounds so personal as to be presumptuous, I must plead that literary criticism is, by its very nature, for ever turning into something else.

John Wain

Worth Doing Badly

Brave Men: A Study of D. H. Lawrence and Simone Weil. By RICHARD REES. *Gollancz.* 18s.

IN A large album which lies on the table of "Pop's" downstairs room at Eton, the features of R. L. E. M. Rees may (if the reviewer accurately recalls his one visit to that lugubrious place) be seen in the same photograph as those of H. M. G. Jebb and C. V. Connolly: that would be at the end of the Kaiser's war. By the mid-twenties, Sir Richard was nursing a constituency for Labour and must already have been one of the few people to see Freud, Jung, and Adler (all three). He solely edited (and financed) Middleton Murry's *Adelphi* from 1930–36; took up painting; drove an ambulance in Spain; thereafter looked after refugees in southern France; served with the French navy during Hitler's war; painted many (and has even sold some) pictures; is, on his mother's side, a Dormer and thus related to one beatified and one conceivably beatifiable Army officer; did much for "George Orwell" (E. A. Blair) in his last years, as he had done much in the years of obscurity; was, apart from *The Sunday Referee*, the first to print Dylan Thomas. The total course of Sir Richard's involvement with things thus exhibits a unique blend of amateurishness and professionalism. So does the present opuscule (made to look much longer than it is by Mr. Gollancz's clever typographers and, indeed, rather spun out in the first place by its author).

After quoting Chesterton's Chestertonian paradox to the effect that, if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly, Sir Richard begins:

I am aware that I cannot possibly have done well what I have attempted to do in this book; but D. H. Lawrence and Simone Weil have been, for me, the two most important writers of this age and I have therefore been compelled, on pain of schizophrenia, to try to relate them in my own mind.

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This Murrylike claim to a compelling necessity need not (one feels confident) be taken seriously. The little book's title comes from Lawrence's statement that "brave men are for ever born, and nothing else is worth having." Though told this—told, moreover, that "men" here means "men and women"—we do not, since a person of each of the two main sexes has been introduced even sub-titularly, quite escape the suggestion which so pleases in the patriotic calypso ("Queen Victoria very good man....").

Although Sir Richard's logic is sometimes a bit peculiar, he writes (in detail) with professional skill. The distinction, the charm, and the radical strength of his early chapters derive, however, from his amateurishness. "Professional" is a word which has latterly acquired mixed significations. In philosophy and history it means "employed by an academic institution"; in literary or other art criticism it means "having access to a weekly column." There are in fact no recognised qualifications for estimating the human, personal, and (dare one say?) spiritual or (to stick the neck out even further) existential importance of writers already sieved in a critical kind of way. We read even Dr. Leavis for his positive, simple, appreciative side. Nobody is afraid of big-bad-wolf Leavis except humbugs, certain professional aspirants, and bloomsberries. If Sir Richard had been a professional critic, he would have been caught up in too many opposing notions to dare to work out in perfect simplicity just why Weil and Lawrence seem to him rather more splendid than anyone else whatever.

About half of the book is spent on this operation. Sir Richard has lived for years in the ghostly company of the two writers, and almost all that he says here is sensitive and distinct and wanted saying. We may doubt whether *The Lost Girl* really stands so high among Lawrence's writings, but no doubt it has been underappreciated. Alas, then the book gets out of hand. There is certainly no reason why it should not be said that Lawrence and Weil had views on art to which the fashionable art of to-day might have seemed repugnant; or that, among younger writers, J. D. Salinger and the late Denton Welch seem to Sir Richard to have most of the qualities he prizes in Weil and Lawrence. Both things could have been said briefly. Both could have been said without heat. For we are led to feel that our author hates modern art far more and far less discriminatingly than either Weil or Lawrence would have done and that neither would have been so anxious to knock other younger writers. Sir Richard has started proclaiming. One even suspects that his boosting of *The Lost Girl* is a way of knocking Dr. Leavis for boosting other books (*The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*) to what Sir Richard considers

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excess. A spiky, sprawling anger has appeared like Pan at a picnic.

About Salinger and Welch themselves, Sir Richard is perceptive, though (to the taste of the reviewer) unconvincing about the latter. His demonstration of Welch's Laurentianness tends only to bring out something more closely related to the "*petit maître* preciosity" which he admits to be also in Welch. Really, to like and be cheered up by "ordinary, simple" people met on a stray encounter is not so very uncommon, and for most of us (I am sorry this sounds so nasty, but Sir Richard's own instances make the opposite seem characteristic of Welch) the people thus met may be of either sex and any age.

In the end, we get back to Weil and Lawrence, but never again with strict and delicate relevance. The comparison between Orwell's *1984* and Simone Weil's unfinished tragedy, *Venise Sauvée*, is illuminating (and Sir Richard has had the journalistically brilliant idea of characterising the degree of human hope in Weil by calling this chapter *1985*), but we are still in the realm of what an angry second baronet feels about the world to-day; and this is even more true of the last chapter in which he attacks Weil and Lawrence for being wrong about money—though I daresay he would deny he was doing so.

Rayner Heppenstall

Thinking Big

The Poverty of Historicism. By KARL R. POPPER. *Routledge & Kegan Paul.* 16s.

ANALYSING a school of political thought without specifying who is alleged to represent it is a dangerous task, though it can sometimes be a useful one. Karl Popper's brilliant swordsmanship in *The Poverty of Historicism*, now for the first time available as a book in English, is an excellent instance of this truth. It is clear that he is denouncing Plato, Marx, and Hegel, but he leaves room for an almost indefinite extension of the list of accused; it could certainly be stretched, without any serious modification of the indictment, to cover Burke, St. Augustine of Hippo, and John Stuart Mill. Certainly there is nothing new about historicism as he defines it; the question is rather whether it is possible to think at all about politics for any appreciable time without committing at least two-thirds of the sins which Professor Popper attributes to "the historicist."

The historicist is sceptical of all the practical and limited investigations of social science, believing in the uniqueness of historical events and in the impossibility of anything which may be properly described as social experiment; he reserves his faith for long-term and large-scale social predictions founded upon general as distinct from detailed observation, and a passion for the whole-scale reconstruction of societies. The historicist is too cautious to assemble statistics but has no hesitation in announcing the destiny of a civilisation; he does not think it safe to speculate about the public reaction to a new brand of cigarette but he knows that the millennium is coming, he can tell you why it is coming, and in a decently approximate fashion when it will arrive. Historicism is the natural friend of utopianism; any tendency to foster a passive attitude towards politics which it might be expected to have because of its deterministic elements is offset by the confidence bred of the knowledge of where history is moving, and by the historicist's habit of thinking of civilisations and communities as entities which must either be left alone or entirely reshaped.

To this attitude Professor Popper opposes the idea of piecemeal social engineering based upon detailed and limited social research. The business of social research, he says, is not to interpret history but to discover the methods by which particular human wishes for concrete improvements in the condition of society can be gratified. We must stop talking about cycles in the development of civilisations, dynamic forces, and laws of social evolution, and start thinking about such social phenomena as are measurable and within limits controllable. If we reply that this is not a sufficiently enterprising procedure to sustain our interest in politics, we must be reminded that the motive of historicism, however bold the doctrine may appear on the surface, is a profound and sterile conservatism. The historicist is a man with an ineradicable political "womb complex"; fundamentally, he wants nothing to change but, understanding that this is impossible, he insists that everything shall change according to fixed laws which will lead him inevitably to the static security for which he pines.

Nobody will doubt that Professor Popper is describing, as he has so brilliantly done before, an attitude of mind which is very familiar and from which much evil comes; but, in this essay, he is reducing that attitude to a series of logically destructible propositions. For all his self-confidence, which is overpowering as well as refreshing ("Since then, I have succeeded in giving a refutation of historicism"), he is a cautious as well as an astute thinker, perpetually anxious to replace the plug before the baby has disappeared. He does not wish to expel history from our calculations, yet the logical and abstract char-

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acter of his argument and the comparatively few illustrations from the literature of political thought by which it is accompanied, leave us in some measure of doubt about what we are permitted and what we are forbidden.

The pivot of the book is the contention that, since the progress of history is influenced by the extent of human knowledge and since it is by definition impossible to predict the growth of human knowledge (to say that we know already what we shall learn in a decade is a contradiction in terms), historical prediction is impossible. This is indeed true if by prediction we mean prophecies which claim to be certain; but a degree of admitted uncertainty is almost inseparable from the idea of political prophecy. It would be hard to argue that the observation of general tendencies in history, the tracing, for instance, of the similarities between different industrial revolutions, had not been as powerful a source of illumination as the close researches of social science into particular aspects of the process. It is extremely difficult to think of politics at all without treating communities for certain purposes as organisms with distinct characteristics and with a propensity to approximate to some kind of rationally describable order in their respective lives. The notion that it is possible to infer from the history of a society some idea of the social good of which that society is capable is not mysticism but common sense. To all this Professor Popper would no doubt agree and none of it is invalidated by his argument, but to some extent it does diminish the practical usefulness of that argument. All generalisations about history should be tempered by humble reservations but this does not show that generalisations about history are valueless. It would surely be hard to prove that this country, for example, had suffered more from the habit of taking large views in politics than from the habit of living hand to mouth on the scientific conclusions and *ad hoc* recommendations of Royal Commissions and working parties. If all this is so, a great deal of what would normally be described as historicism must have a value for which Professor Popper's sharply defined categories do not leave room and piecemeal social engineering cannot be the only proper way of conducting politics.

T. E. Utley

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About Our Authors

JAMES AGEE died of a heart attack in New York on 16th May, 1955, at the age of forty-five. His career as a writer was extraordinarily varied. His first (and only) book of poems, *Permit Me Voyage*, published when he was in his 'twenties, established his literary reputation at one stroke. In the late 1930's, he wrote *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, a panoramic lyrical-descriptive study of the life of the Southern sharecropper, which is one of the truly memorable books of the pre-war period. (It is now out of print, and individual copies are reported to bring £10 or more on the New York literary market.) During his last years, he worked mainly in Hollywood, writing such screen plays as "The Quiet One" and "The African Queen." His posthumous novel, *A Death in the Family*, will be published by Gollancz in the summer.

JOHN DOUGLAS PRINGLE, who is now Deputy Editor of *The Observer*, recently returned to England from Australia where he edited *The Sydney Morning Herald* from 1952 to 1957. Born in Scotland, and educated at Shrewsbury and Oxford, he got his first chance in journalism on the *Manchester Guardian* in the years before the war. After serving in the army he rejoined the *Manchester Guardian* as Assistant Editor in 1944. In 1948 he moved to *The Times* and from there, in 1952, to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. His article on Sydney is taken from a book on the urban civilisation of Australia which will shortly be published by Chatto and Windus. He has written one other book, *China Struggles for Unity*, a Penguin special.

KRISHNA BALDEV VAID is lecturer in English at Delhi University, where he got his master's degree in 1949. He was born in 1927 in West Punjab (now Pakistan), is married, and has two daughters. He has published a novel in Hindi as well as more than twenty stories in Hindi, Urdu, and English. He always writes in Hindi or Urdu and then makes his own English translations. (The story we publish in this issue was originally written in Hindi.) His second novel is now well under way.

IN OUR February issue, in Daniel Bell's article, "The Capitalism of the Proletariat," there appeared the following statement:

> "Few electronics firms, for example, will undertake to make wirings and fixtures to be installed in New York construction projects since the electricians in New York refuse to handle work that was not made in New York.'

We have received a letter from Local Union No. 3, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, A.F.L.-C.I.O., pointing out that this statement is inaccurate. While it is true that Local Union No. 3 used to refuse to handle work and instal wiring and fixtures which were not manufactured in New York City, for the past few years it has, in its own words, "consistently and regularly installed all wiring and fixtures on New York construction regardless and irrespective of the fact that such wiring and fixtures were manufactured outside of New York." We are happy to get this matter straight.—ED.

SHIRLEY LETWIN is on the faculty of Brandeis University in Massachusetts. She is preparing a study of English social thought in the 19th century.... LAURENCE KITCHIN contributes dramatic criticism to a leading London daily, and has also broadcast several talks on the Third Programme.

The editorial and business offices of ENCOUNTER are at 25 Haymarket London S.W.1. MSS should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope (English stamp) or international reply coupons, otherwise they cannot be returned.

ENCOUNTER is published by Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd. 7 John Street, Bloomsbury, W.C.1

for

THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM

104 Boulevard Haussmann, Paris 8, France

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